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# MENTAL AND SOCIAL CULTURE:

## A TEXT BOOK

FOR

## SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES.

BY

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# PREFACE.

WHAT are the means by which my mental faculties may be best developed and strengthened? What is the most successful mode of study? How much, and when, and how? How shall I learn the principles of politeness, of personal accomplishment—of rendering myself agreeable? What are the errors into which I am most liable to fall? what the habits I should seek to avoid?

These are questions that come home to every youth, but on which instruction has been greatly neglected. With no word of counsel in his whole course of instruction, the youth is expected to develop for himself mental success and social excellence.

To present the leading principles of mental and social culture, is the object of this work. The first thirteen chapters, excepting the eighth, are abridged from Dr. Watts' inestimable *Improvement of the Mind.* Many of the maxims and rules of conversation and politeness are from Chesterfield's *Letters to his Son.* A few paragraphs have been taken from other standard authors. For the remainder of the work, as well as for its general arrangement, the author alone must be responsible.

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# INTRODUCTION.

WHEN we are asked any simple question, as, "What will the weather be to-morrow?" or, "How much is four times thirteen?" that which does the work of finding or preparing an answer is called *The Mind;* it is *that part of our being which does our thinking.* Of its substance we know nothing; we call it *Spirit.* We have, however, some knowledge of the principles upon which it acts. Like the body, it is under the control of fixed and definite laws, which govern its growth and activity.

We well know that if we would attain to proficiency in any manual art, the hand must be trained. If we would become expert upon any musical instrument, not only must the hands be made to run over the keys hour after hour, and day by day, but this must be done in accordance with the laws of muscular growth and discipline. In like manner, if we would attain to mental excellence, it must be by an observance of the laws of the mind.

We are constituted in our natures *social beings:* much of our lives is spent in the companionship of others, and much of our happiness is derived from them. Hence our mental improvement must be considered in this twofold aspect,—first, the action of the mind by itself; second, its action in connection with others.

By the first of these we learn the manner in which we improve the power of thought, reasoning, and memory; and in which we gather knowledge. By the second, we learn the art of deriving knowledge and happiness from others, as well as of bestowing the same in return.

These two elements of culture are, however, so constantly intermingled in our education and life, that it will be more advantageous to consider them together, as we find them in our daily study and intercourse.

We shall therefore treat first, Of the rules for the government of mind in the attainment of knowledge: second, Of the modes of obtaining knowledge, both individual and social: third, Of the general principles of self-government and social intercourse, with some practical hints adapted to the improvement of youth.

# MENTAL AND SOCIAL CULTURE.

## CHAPTER I.

### HOW TO OBTAIN KNOWLEDGE.

RULE I.—DEEPLY possess your mind with the importance of a good judgment, and the rich and inestimable advantage of right reasoning. Review the instances of your own misconduct in life; think how many follies and sorrows you might have escaped, and how much guilt and misery you might have prevented, if from your early years you had taken due pains to judge aright concerning persons, times, and things. This will awaken you with lively vigor to address yourselves to the work of improving your reasoning powers, and seizing every opportunity and advantage for that end.

II. Consider the weakness and frailty of human nature in general, which arise from the very constitution of a soul united to a material body. Consider the depth and difficulty of many truths, and the flattering appearances of falsehood, whence arise an infinite variety of dangers to which we are exposed in our judgment of things.

III. A slight view of things so momentous is not sufficient. You should therefore contrive and practise proper methods to acquaint yourself with your own ignorance, and to impress your mind with a sense of the low and imperfect degree of your present knowledge, that you may be incited with

labor and activity to pursue after greater measures. Among others, you may find methods such as these successful:

1. Survey at times the vast and unlimited regions of learning. Let your meditations run over the names of all the sciences, with their numerous branchings, and innumerable particular themes of knowledge; and then reflect how few of them you are acquainted with in any tolerable degree.

2. Think what a numberless variety of questions and difficulties there are belonging even to that particular science in which you have made the greatest progress, and how few of them there are in which you have arrived at a final and undoubted certainty.

3. Read the accounts of those vast treasures of knowledge which some of the dead have possessed, and some of the living do possess. Read the almost incredible advances which have been made in science. Acquaint yourself with persons of great learning, that by converse among them, and comparing yourself with them, you may be animated with new zeal to equal them as far as possible, or to exceed: thus let your diligence be quickened by a generous and laudable emulation.

Remember this, that if upon some few superficial acquirements you value, exalt, and swell yourself, as though you were a man of learning already, you are thereby building an impassable barrier against all improvement: you will lie down and indulge idleness, and rest yourself contented in the midst of deep and shameful ignorance.

IV. Presume not too much upon a bright genius, a ready wit, and good parts; for this, without labor and study, will never make a man of knowledge and wisdom. This has been an unhappy temptation, to persons of a vigorous and lively fancy, to despise learning and study. They have been acknowledged to shine in an assembly, and to sparkle in a discourse on common topics, and thence they took it into their heads to abandon reading and labor, and grow old in

ignorance; but when they had lost their vivacity of animal nature and youth, they became stupid and sottish even to contempt and ridicule.

Witty men sometimes have sense enough to know their own foible; and therefore they craftily shun the attacks of argument, or boldly pretend to despise and renounce them, because they are conscious of their own ignorance, and inwardly confess their want of acquaintance with the skill of reasoning.

V. As you are not to fancy yourself a learned man because you are blessed with a ready wit, so neither must you imagine that large and laborious reading, and a strong memory, can denominate you truly wise.

It is meditation and studious thought, it is the exercise of your own reason and judgment upon all you read, that gives good sense even to the best genius, and affords your understanding the truest improvement. A boy of a strong memory may repeat a whole book of Euclid, yet be no geometrician; for he may not be able perhaps to demonstrate one single theorem.

A well-furnished library and a capacious memory are indeed of singular use towards the improvement of the mind; but if all your learning be nothing but a mere amassment of what others have written, without a due penetration into the meaning, and without a judicious choice and determination of your own sentiments, I do not see what title your head has to true learning above your shelves. Though you have read philosophy and theology, morals and metaphysics in abundance, and every other art and science, yet if your memory is the only faculty employed, with the neglect of your reasoning powers, you can justly claim no higher character than that of a good historian of the sciences.

Here note, many of the foregoing rules are more peculiarly proper for those who are conceited of their abilities, and are ready to entertain a high opinion of themselves.

But a modest, humble youth, of a good genius, should not suffer himself to be discouraged by any of these considerations. They are designed only as a spur to diligence, and a guard against vanity and pride.

VI. Be not so weak as to imagine that a life of learning is a life of laziness and ease. Dare not give up yourself to any of the learned professions, unless you are resolved to labor hard at study, and can make it your delight, and the joy of your life, according to the motto of Lord Chancellor King:

.... Labor ipse voluptas.

It is no idle thing to be a scholar indeed. A man much addicted to luxury and pleasure, recreation and pastime, should never pretend to devote himself to the sciences.

VII. Let the hope of new discoveries, as well as the satisfaction and pleasure of known truths, animate your daily industry. Do not think learning in general is arrived at its perfection, or that the knowledge of any particular subject in any science cannot be improved, merely because it has lain five hundred or a thousand years without improvement. The present age, by the blessing of God on the ingenuity and diligence of men, has brought to light such truths in natural philosophy, and such discoveries in the heavens and the earth, as seemed to be beyond the reach of man.

VIII. Do not hover always on the surface of things, nor take up suddenly with mere appearances; but penetrate into the depth of matters, as far as your time and circumstances allow, especially in those things which relate to your own profession. Do not indulge yourselves to judge of things by the first glimpse, or a short and superficial view of them; for this will fill the mind with errors and prejudices, and give it a wrong turn and an ill habit of thinking, and make much work for retraction.

As for those sciences or those parts of knowledge which

either your profession, your leisure, your inclination, or your incapacity forbid you to pursue with much application, or to search far into them, you must be contented with an historical and superficial knowledge of them, and not pretend to form any judgment of your own on those subjects which you understand very imperfectly.

IX. Once a day, especially in the early years of life and study, call yourselves to an account, and inquire what new ideas, what new proposition or truth you have gained, what further confirmation of known truths, and what advances you have made in any part of knowledge; and let no day, if possible, pass away without some intellectual gain: such a course, well pursued, must certainly advance you in useful knowledge. It is a wise proverb among the learned, borrowed from the lips and practice of a celebrated painter, *Nulla dies sine linea*, "Let no day pass without one line at least;" and it was a sacred rule among the Pythagoreans that they should every evening thrice run over the actions and affairs of the day, and examine what their conduct had been, what they had done, or what they had neglected; and they assured their pupils that by this method they would make a noble progress in the path of virtue.

X. Maintain a constant watch at all times against a dogmatical spirit; fix not your assent to any proposition in a firm and unalterable manner, until you have some firm and unalterable ground for it—until you have arrived at some clear and sure evidence, and have turned the proposition on all sides, and searched the matter through and through, so that you cannot be mistaken. And even where you may think you have full grounds of assurance, be not too early nor too frequent in expressing this assurance in a peremptory and positive manner, remembering that human nature is always liable to mistake.

A dogmatical spirit has many inconveniences attending it, as it stops the ear against all further reasoning upon that

subject, and shuts up the mind from all further improvements of knowledge. If you have resolutely fixed your opinion, though it be upon too slight and insufficient grounds, you will stand determined to renounce the strongest reason brought for the contrary opinion, and grow obstinate against the force of the clearest argument.

A dogmatical spirit naturally leads us to arrogance of mind, and gives a man airs in conversation which are too haughty and assuming.

A dogmatical spirit inclines a man to be censorious of his neighbors. Every one of his own opinions appears to him written as it were with sunbeams, and he grows angry that his neighbor does not see it in the same light. He is tempted to disdain his correspondents as men of a low and dark understanding, because they will not believe what he does.

Men of this spirit, when they deal in controversy, delight in reproaches. They abound in tossing about absurdity and stupidity among their brethren; they cast the imputation of heresy and nonsense plentifully upon their antagonists, and in matters of sacred importance they deal out their anathemas in abundance upon Christians better than themselves; they denounce damnation upon their neighbors without either justice or mercy; and when they pronounce sentences of divine wrath against supposed heretics, they add their own human fire and indignation. A dogmatist in religion is not a great way off from a bigot, and is in high danger of growing up to be a persecutor.

XI. Though caution and slow assent will guard you against frequent mistakes, yet you should have courage enough to retract any mistake and confess any error; frequent changes are tokens of levity in our first determinations, yet you should never be too proud to change your opinion, nor frightened at the name of changeling. Learn to scorn those vulgar bugbears, which confirm foolish man in his old mistakes, for fear of being charged with inconstancy.

I confess it is better not to judge than to judge falsely; it is wiser to withhold our assent till we see complete evidence: but if we have too suddenly given our assent, as the wisest man sometimes does, if we have professed what we find afterwards to be false, we should never be ashamed nor afraid to renounce the mistake.

XII. He that would raise his judgment above the vulgar rank of mankind, and learn to pass a just sentence on persons and things, must take heed of a fanciful temper of mind, and a humorous conduct in his affairs. Fancy and humor, early and constantly indulged, may expect an old age overrun with follies.

A humorist is one whose habit it is to be greatly pleased or displeased with little things, who sets his heart much upon matters of small importance, who has his will determined every day by trifles, his actions seldom directed by the reason and nature of things, and his passions frequently raised by things of little moment. Where this practice is allowed, it will insensibly warp the judgment to pronounce little things great, and tempt you to lay a great weight upon them. In short, this temper will incline you to pass an unjust value on almost every thing that occurs, and every step you take in this path is just so far out of the way to wisdom.

XIII. For the same reason, have a care of trifling with things important and momentous, or of sporting with things awful and sacred: do not indulge a spirit of ridicule, as some witty men do, on all occasions and subjects. This will as unhappily bias the judgment on the other side, and incline you to set a low estimate on the most valuable objects. Whatsoever evil habit we indulge in will insensibly obtain a power over our understanding and betray us into many errors.

XIV. Ever maintain a virtuous and pious frame of spirit, for an indulgence of vicious inclinations debases the under-

standing and perverts the judgment. Sensuality ruins the better faculties of the mind. An indulgence of appetite and passion enfeebles the powers of reason: it makes the judgment weak and susceptible to every falsehood, and especially to such mistakes as have a tendency towards the gratification of the animal nature, and it warps the soul aside from that steadfast honesty and integrity that necessarily belong to the pursuit of truth. It is the virtuous man who is in a fair way to wisdom. "God gives to those that are good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy:" (Eccles. ii. 26.)

Piety towards God, as well as sobriety and virtue, are necessary qualifications to make a truly wise and judicious man. He that abandons religion must act in such contradiction to his own conscience and best judgment, that he abuses and spoils the faculty itself. It is thus in the nature of things, and it is thus by the righteous judgment of God.

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## CHAPTER II.

### OBSERVATION, READING, INSTRUCTION BY LECTURES, CONVERSATION, AND STUDY, COMPARED.

THERE are five eminent means or methods whereby the mind is improved in the knowledge of things; and these are observation, reading, instruction by lectures, conversation, and meditation; the last, in a more peculiar manner, is called study.

Let us survey the general definitions or descriptions of each and all of them.

I. *Observation* is the notice we take of all occurrences, whether they are sensible or intellectual, whether relating to persons or things, to ourselves or others. It is this that

furnishes us, even from our infancy, with a rich variety of ideas and propositions, words and phrases: it is by this we know that fire will burn, that the sun gives light, that a horse eats grass, that an acorn produces an oak, that man is a being capable of reasoning and discourse, that our judgment is weak, that our mistakes are many, that our sorrows are great, that our bodies die and are carried to the grave, and that one generation succeeds another. All those things which we see, which we hear or feel, which we perceive by sense or consciousness, or which we know in a direct manner, with scarce any exercise of our reflecting faculties or our reasoning powers, may be included under the general name of *observation.*

When *observation* relates to any thing that immediately concerns ourselves, and of which we are conscious, it may be called *experience.* So I am said to know or experience that I have in myself a power of thinking, fearing, loving; that I have appetites and passions working in me, and that many personal occurrences have attended me in life.

When we are searching out the nature or properties of any thing by various methods of trial, or when we apply some active powers, or set causes to work to observe what effects they will produce, this sort of observation is called *experiment.* When I throw a bullet into water, I find it sinks; and when I throw the same bullet into quicksilver, I see it swims; but if I beat out the bullet into a thin hollow shape, like a dish, then it will swim in the water also. So when I strike two flints together, I find they produce fire: when I throw a seed in the earth, it grows up into a plant. All these belong to the first method of knowledge, which I shall call *observation.*

II. *Reading* is that means or method of obtaining knowledge whereby we acquaint ourselves with what other men have written or published to the world in their writings. The arts of reading and writing are of infinite advantage,

for by them we are made partakers of the sentiments, observations, reasonings, and improvements of all the learned world, in the most remote nations, and in former ages almost from the beginning of mankind.

III. *Public* or *private lectures* are such verbal instructions as are given by a teacher while the learners attend in silence. This is the way of learning religion from the pulpit, or of philosophy or theology from the professor's chair, or of mathematics by a teacher showing us various theorems or problems.

IV. *Conversation* is another method of improving our minds, wherein, by mutual discourse and inquiry, we learn the sentiments of others, as well as communicate to them our own sentiments. Sometimes, indeed, though both parties speak by turns, the advantage is only on one side, as when a teacher and a learner meet and discourse together; but frequently the profit is mutual. Under this head of conversation we may also rank disputes of various kinds.

V. *Meditation* or *study* includes all those exercises of the mind, whereby we render all the former methods useful for our increase in true knowledge and wisdom. It is by meditation we come to confirm our memory of things that pass through our thoughts in the occurrences of life, in our own experiences, and in the observations we make. It is by meditation that we draw various inferences and establish in our minds general principles of knowledge. It is by meditation that we compare the various ideas which we derive from our senses, or from the operations of our souls, and join them in propositions. It is by meditation that we fix in our memory whatsoever we learn, and form our judgment of the truth or falsehood, the strength or weakness, of what others speak or write.

## Section I.—Observation.

1. It is owing to *observation* that our mind is furnished with the first simple and complex ideas. It is this that lays the ground-work and foundation of all knowledge, and makes us capable of using any of the other methods for improving the mind; for if we did not attain a variety of sensible and intellectual ideas by the sensations of outward objects, by the consciousness of our own appetites and passions, pleasures and pains, and by inward experience of the actings of our own spirits, it would be impossible either for men or books to teach us any thing. It is observation that must give us our first ideas of things, as it includes sense and consciousness.

2. All our knowledge derived from observation, whether it be of single ideas or of propositions, is knowledge gotten at first hand. Hereby we see and know things as they are, or as they appear to us; we take the impressions of them on our minds from the original objects themselves, which give clear and strong conceptions. Whereas the knowledge we derive from lectures, reading, and conversation is but the copy of other men's ideas—that is, the picture of a picture.

3. Another advantage of observation is, that we may gain knowledge all the day long, and every moment of our lives. Every moment of our existence, except while we are asleep, we may be adding something to our intellectual treasures, and even the remembrance of our dreaming will teach us some truths, and lay a foundation for a better acquaintance with human nature, both in the powers and in the frailties of it.

## Section II.—Reading.

1. By *reading* we acquaint ourselves in a very extensive manner with the affairs, actions, and thoughts of the living

and the dead in the most remote nations and most distant ages, and that with as much ease as though they lived in our own age and nation. By *reading* we may learn something from all portions of mankind, whereas by *observation* we learn all from ourselves, and only what comes within our own direct cognizance; and by conversation we can enjoy only the assistance of a very few persons—those who are near us and live at the same time, our neighbors and contemporaries; but our knowledge is much more narrowed still if we confine ourselves to our own solitary reasonings, without observation or reading, for then all our improvement must arise only from our own inward powers and meditations.

2. By reading we learn not only the actions and the sentiments of different nations and ages, but we transfer to ourselves the knowledge and improvements of the most learned men, the wisest and the best of mankind, when or whereso-ever they may have lived; whereas we can obtain the conversation and instruction of those only who are within the reach of our dwelling or our acquaintance, whether they are wise or unwise; and sometimes that narrow sphere scarce affords any person of eminence in wisdom or learning, unless our instructor happen to have this character. And as for our study and meditations, even when we arrive at some good degree of learning, our opportunities for further improvement in knowledge by them are still far more contracted than those that may be afforded by reading.

3. When we read good authors we learn the best, the most labored, and most refined sentiments of wise and learned men, for they have studied hard, and have committed to writing their maturest thoughts, the results of long study and experience; whereas by conversation, and in lectures, we often obtain only the present thoughts of our tutors or friends, which, though they may be bright and useful, are at first perhaps sudden and indigested, and mere hints which have risen to no maturity.

4. It is another advantage of reading that we may review what we have read. We may consult the page again and again, and meditate on it at successive seasons in our serenest and most retired hours, having the book always at hand; but what we obtain by conversation and in lectures is often lost again as soon as the company breaks up or the day vanishes, unless we happen to have a good memory or quickly retire and note down what we have found of value. For the same reason, and for the want of retiring and writing, many a learned man has lost useful meditations of his own, and could never recall them.

## Section III.—Lectures.

1. There is something more sprightly, more delightful and entertaining in the living discourse of a wise and well-qualified teacher, than there is in the silent and sedentary practice of reading. The very turn of voice, the good pronunciation, and the polite and alluring manner which some teachers have attained, will engage the attention, keep the soul fixed, and convey instruction in a more lively and forcible way than is possible in the mere reading of books in the silence and retirement of the closet.

2. A tutor or instructor, when he paraphrases and explains an author, can mark out the precise point of difficulty or controversy and unfold it. He can show you which paragraphs are of greatest importance, and which are of less moment. He can teach his hearers what authors or what parts of an author are best worth reading on any particular subject, and thus save his disciples much time and pains by shortening the labors of their private studies. He can show you what were the doctrines of the ancients in a compendium which perhaps would cost much labor and the perusal of many books to attain. He can inform you what new doctrines or sentiments are arising in the world before they come

to be public, as well as acquaint you with his own private thoughts and his own experiments and observations, which never were and perhaps never will be published to the world, and yet may be very valuable and useful.

3. A living instructor can convey to our *senses* those notions with which he would furnish our minds when he teaches us natural philosophy or most parts of mathematical learning. He can make the experiments before our eyes. He can describe figures and diagrams, point to the lines and angles, and make the demonstration in an intelligible manner by sensible means, which cannot so well be done by reading, even though we should have the same figures lying in a book before our eyes. A living teacher, therefore, is a most necessary help in these studies.

I might also add that even where the subject of discourse is moral, logical, or rhetorical, and does not directly come under the notice of our senses, a tutor may explain his ideas by such familiar examples and plain or simple similitudes as seldom find place in books and writings.

4. When an instructor in his lectures delivers any matter of difficulty, or expresses himself in such a manner as seems obscure, so that you do not take up his ideas clearly or fully, you have opportunity, when the lecture is finished or at other proper seasons, to inquire how such a sentence should be understood, or how such a difficulty may be explained and removed.

If there be permission given to converse freely with the tutor, either in the midst of the lecture or at the end of it, concerning any doubts or difficulties that occur to the hearer, this brings it very near to conversation or discourse.

## Section IV.—Conversation.

1. When we converse familiarly with a learned friend, we have his own help at hand to explain to us every word and

sentiment that seems obscure in his discourse, and to inform us of his whole meaning, so that we are in much less danger of mistaking his sense; whereas in books whatsoever is really obscure may abide always obscure without remedy, since the author is not at hand that we may inquire his meaning.

2. If we mistake the meaning of our friend in conversation we are quickly set right again, but in reading we many times go on in the same mistake, and are not capable of recovering ourselves from it. Thence it comes to pass that we have so many contests in all ages about the meaning of ancient authors, and especially the sacred writers.

3. When we are discoursing upon any theme with a friend, we may propose our doubts and objections against his sentiments and have them solved and answered at once. The difficulties that arise in our minds may be removed by one enlightening word; whereas in reading, if a difficulty or question arise in our thoughts, which the author has not happened to mention, we must be content without a present answer or solution of it. Books cannot speak.

4. Not only are the doubts which arise in the mind upon any subject or discourse easily proposed and solved in conversation, but the difficulties we meet with in books and in our private studies may find a relief by friendly conferences. We may pore upon a knotty point in solitary meditation many months without a solution, because perhaps we have gotten into a wrong tract of thought, and our labor, while we are pursuing a false scent, is not only useless and unsuccessful, but it leads us perhaps into a long train of error for want of being corrected in the first step. But if we note down the difficulty when we read it, we may propose it to an intelligent friend or teacher when we see him. We may thus be relieved in a moment and find the difficulty vanish: he beholds the object perhaps in a different view, sets it before us in quite another light, leads us at once into evidence and truth, and that with a delightful surprise.

5. Conversation calls into light what has been lodged in the recesses and secret chambers of the soul. By occasional hints and incidents it brings useful notions into remembrance: it unfolds and displays the hidden treasures of knowledge with which reading, observation, and study has before furnished the mind. By mutual discourse the soul is awakened and allured to bring forth its hoards of knowledge, and it learns how to render them most useful to mankind. A man of vast reading without conversation is like a miser who lives only to himself.

6. In free and friendly conversation our intellectual powers are more animated, and our spirits act with a superior vigor in the quest and pursuit of unknown truths. There is a sharpness and sagacity of thought that attends conversation beyond what we find whilst we are shut up reading and musing in our retirement. Our souls may be serene in solitude, but not sparkling, though perhaps we are employed in reading the works of the brightest writers. It often happens in free discourse that new thoughts are strangely struck out, which in calm and silent reading would never be excited. By conversation you will both give and receive this benefit, as flints when put into motion and striking against each other produce living fire on both sides, which would never have arisen from the same hard materials in a state of rest.

7. In generous conversation amongst ingenious and learned men we have the great advantage of proposing our private opinions, and of bringing our sentiments to the test, and learning in a safe and compendious way what the world will judge of them, how mankind will receive them, what objections may be raised against them, what defects there are in our scheme, and how to correct our mistakes. These advantages are not so easy to be obtained by our own private meditations, for the pleasure we take in our own notions, and the passion of self-love, as well as the narrowness of our views, tempt us to pass too favorable an opinion on our own

schemes; whereas the variety of genius in our several associates will give happy notice how our opinions will stand in the view of mankind.

8. It is also another considerable advantage of conversation, that it furnishes the student with a knowledge of men and the affairs of life, as reading furnishes him with book-learning. A man who dwells all his days among books may amass a great amount of knowledge, but he may still be a mere scholar, which is a contemptible sort of character in the world. A hermit shut up in his cell in a college contracts a sort of mould and rust upon his soul, and all his airs of behavior have a certain awkwardness in them; but these awkward airs are worn away by degrees in company. The scholar becomes a citizen or a gentleman, a neighbor and a friend: he learns how to dress his sentiments in the fairest colors, as well as to set them in the strongest light. Thus he brings out his notions with honor: he makes some use of them in the world, and improves theory by practice.

## Section V.—Meditation.

Mere lectures, reading, and conversation, without thinking, are not sufficient to make a man of knowledge and wisdom. It is our own thought and reflection, study and meditation, that must attend all the other methods of improvement, and perfect them.

1. Though observation and instruction, reading and conversation, may furnish us with many ideas of men and things, yet it is our own *meditation*, and the labor of our own thoughts, that must form our judgment of them. It is our own mind that must judge for ourselves concerning the agreement or disagreement of ideas, and form propositions of truth out of them. Reading and conversation may acquaint us with many truths, and with many arguments to support them; but it is our own study and reasoning that

must determine whether the propositions are true, and whether the arguments are just and solid.

2. It is confessed there are a thousand things which our eyes have not seen, and which would never come within the reach of our personal and immediate knowledge and observation, because of the distance of time and place: these must be known by consulting other persons; and that is done either in their writings or in their discourses. But after all, let this be a fixed point with us, that *our own reflection and judgment alone must determine how far we should receive that of which books or men inform us*, and how far they are worthy of our assent and credit.

3. It is meditation and study that transfer and convey the notions and sentiments of others to ourselves, so as to make them properly our own. *It is our own judgment upon them, as well as our memory of them, that makes them become our own property.* It does as it were concoct our intellectual food, and turns it into a part of ourselves, just as a man may call his limbs and his flesh his own, whether he borrowed the materials from the ox or the sheep, from the lark or the lobster, whether he derived it from corn or milk, the fruits of the trees, or the herbs and roots of the earth: it is all now become one substance with himself, and he wields and manages those muscles and limbs for his own proper purposes, which once were the substance of other animals or of vegetables.

4. By study and meditation we improve the hints that we have acquired by observation, conversation, and reading. We take more time in thinking, and by the labor of the mind we penetrate deeper into the themes of knowledge, and carry our thoughts sometimes much further on many subjects than we ever met with in the reflections of others, either in the books of the dead or the discourses of the living. It is our own reasoning that draws out one truth from another, and forms a whole scheme or science from a few hints which we borrowed elsewhere.

5. By a survey of these things we may justly conclude that he who spends all his time in hearing lectures, or poring upon books, without observation, meditation, or converse, will have but a mere historical knowledge of learning, and be able only to tell what others have known or said on any subject. He that lets all his time flow away in conversation, without due observation, reading, or study, will gain but a slight and superficial knowledge, which will be in danger of vanishing with the voice of the speaker. He that confines himself to his closet and his own narrow observation of things, and is taught only by his own solitary thoughts, without instruction by lectures, reading, or free conversation, will be in danger of a narrow spirit, a vain conceit of himself, and an unreasonable contempt of others; and after all, he will obtain but a very limited and imperfect view and knowledge of things, and will seldom learn how to make that knowledge useful.

These five methods of improvement should be pursued jointly, and go hand in hand where our circumstances are so happy as to find opportunity and convenience to enjoy them all; though I must give opinion that two of them, namely, reading and meditation, should employ much more of our time than public lectures or conversation and discourse. As for observation, we may be always acquiring knowledge in that way, whether we are alone or in company.

## CHAPTER III.

### RULES RELATING TO OBSERVATION.

In giving a few directions concerning this method of improvement, I shall not confine myself to the first mere impression of objects on the mind by observation, but include also some hints which relate to the first, most easy, and obvious reflections which arise from them.

I. Let the enlargement of your knowledge be a constant view and design in life, since there is no time or place, no transactions, occurrences, or engagements, which exclude us from this method of improving the mind. When we are alone, even in darkness and silence, we may converse with our own hearts, observe the working of our own spirits, and reflect upon the inward motions of our own passions in some of the latest occurrences in life; we may acquaint ourselves with the powers and properties, the tendencies and inclinations both of body and spirit, and so gain a more intimate knowledge of ourselves. When we are in company, we may discover something more of human nature, of human passions and follies, and of human affairs, vices, and virtues, by conversing with mankind and observing their conduct. Nor is there any thing more valuable than the knowledge of ourselves and the knowledge of men, except it be a knowledge of God who made us, and our relation to him as our Governor.

When we are in the house or the city, wheresoever we turn our eyes we see the works of men; when we are abroad in the country we behold more of the works of God. The skies above and the ground beneath us, the animal and

vegetable world round about us, may entertain our observation with ten thousand varieties.

Endeavor, therefore, to derive some instruction or improvement of the mind from every thing which you see or hear, from every thing which occurs in human life, from every thing within you or without you.

1. Fetch down knowledge from the clouds, the stars, the sun, the moon, and the revolutions of the planets. Dig and draw up valuable meditations from the depths of the earth, and search them through the vast oceans of water. Extract intellectual improvement from the minerals and metals, from the wonders of nature among the vegetables and herbs, trees and flowers. Learn lessons from the birds and the beasts, and the meanest insects. Read the wisdom of God and his admirable contrivance in them all; read his almighty power, his rich and various goodness in all the works of his hands.

2. From the day and the night, the hours and the flying minutes, learn a wise improvement of time, and be watchful to seize every opportunity to increase in knowledge.

3. From the vicissitudes and revolutions of nations and families, and from the various occurrences of the world, learn the instability of mortal affairs, the uncertainty of life.

4. From the vices and follies of others, observe what is hateful in them; consider how such a practice looks in another person, and remember that it looks as ill or worse in yourself. From the virtue of others learn something worthy of your imitation.

5. From the deformity, the distress, or calamity of others, derive lessons of thankfulness to God, and hymns of grateful praise to your Creator, Governor, and Benefactor, who has formed you in a better mould, and guarded you from those evils. Learn also the sacred lesson of contentment in your own estate, and compassion to your neighbor under his miseries.

6. From your natural powers make this inference, that they were not given you for nothing, but for some useful employment to the honor of your Maker, and for the good of your fellow-creatures, as well as for your own best interest and final happiness.

7. From the sorrows, the pains, the sicknesses, and sufferings that attend you, learn the evil of sin and the imperfection of your present state. From your own sins and follies learn the patience of God towards you, and the practice of humility towards God and man.

8. Thus from every appearance in nature, and from every occurrence of life, you may derive natural, moral, and religious observations to entertain your minds, as well as rules of conduct in the affairs relating to this life and to that which is to come.

II. In order to furnish the mind with a rich variety of ideas, the laudable curiosity of young people should be indulged and gratified, rather than discouraged. It is a very hopeful sign in young persons to see them curious in observing and inquisitive in searching into things that occur; nor should such an inquiring temper be frowned into silence, or rigorously restrained, but should rather be satisfied with proper answers.

For this reason, also, where time and fortune allow it, young people should be led into company at proper seasons, should be carried abroad to see the fields and the woods and the rivers, the buildings, towns, and cities distant from their own dwelling. They should be entertained with the sight of strange birds, beasts, fishes, insects, vegetables, and productions both of nature and art of every kind, whether they are the products of their own or of foreign nations; and in due time, where Providence gives opportunity, they may travel under a wise inspector or tutor to different parts of the world for the same end, that they may bring home treasures of useful knowledge.

III. Among all your observations write down what is most remarkable and uncommon; reserve these remarks in store for proper occasions, and at proper seasons take a review of them. Such a practice will give you a habit of useful thinking: this will secure the workings of your soul from running to waste; and by this means even your looser moments will turn to happy account both here and hereafter.

And whatever useful observations have been made, let them be at least some part of the subject of your conversation among your friends at next meeting.

Let his circumstances or situation in life be what or where they will, a man should never neglect the improvement which may be derived from observation. Let him rove through the earth or the seas, or pursue his diversions in whatever part of the world he pleases; let prosperous or adverse fortune call him to the most distant parts of the globe, still let him carry on his knowledge and the improvement of his soul by wise observations. In due time, by this means, he may render himself some way useful to mankind.

IV. Let us keep our minds as free as possible from passions and prejudices, for these will give a wrong turn to our observations both on persons and things. The eyes of a man in the jaundice make yellow observations on every thing; and the soul, tinctured with any passion or prejudice, diffuses a false color over the real appearance of things, and disguises many of the common occurrences of life; it never beholds things in a true light, nor suffers them to appear as they are. Whensoever, therefore, you would make proper observations, let self, with all its influences, stand aside as far as possible; abstract your own interest and your own concern from them, and bid all friendships and enmities stand aloof and keep out of the way.

If this rule were well obeyed we should be much better guarded against those common pieces of misconduct in the observations of men, namely, the false judgments of pride

and envy. How ready is envy to mingle with the notices which we take of other persons! How often are mankind prone to put an ill sense upon the action of their neighbors, to take a survey of them in an evil position and in an unhappy light! By this we are led to form a worse opinion of our neighbors than they deserve, while at the same time pride and self-flattery tempt us to make unjust observations on ourselves in our own favor.

V. In making observations on persons, take care of indulging that busy curiosity which is ever inquiring into private and domestic affairs, with an endless itch of learning the secret history of families. It is but seldom that such a prying curiosity attains any valuable ends; it often begets suspicions, jealousies, and disturbances in households, and is a frequent temptation to persons to defame their neighbors.

VI. Let your observation, even of persons and their conduct, be chiefly designed to lead you to a better acquaintance with things, particularly with human nature; and to inform you what to imitate and what to avoid, rather than to furnish matter for the evil passions of the mind, or the impertinencies of discourse and reproaches of the tongue.

VII. Though it may be proper sometimes to make your observations concerning persons as well as things the subject of discourse in learned or useful conversations, yet whatever remarks you make on persons, particularly to their disadvantage, should for the most part lie hid in your own breast, till some just and apparent occasion, some necessary call of Providence, leads you to speak of them.

If the character or conduct which you observe be greatly culpable, it should so much the less be published. You may treasure up such observations of the follies or vices of your neighbors as may be a constant guard against your practising the same, without exposing the reputation of your neighbor on that account. It is a good old rule, *that our*

*conversation should rather be laid out on things than on persons;* and this rule should generally be observed, unless names be concealed, wheresoever the faults or follies of mankind are our present theme.

VIII. Be not too hasty to erect general theories from a few particular observations, appearances, or experiments. This is what logicians call a false induction. When general observations are drawn from so many particulars as to become certain and indubitable, they are jewels of knowledge, comprehending great treasure in little room; but they are therefore to be made with the greater care and caution, lest errors become large and diffusive, if we should mistake in these general notions.

A hasty determination of universal principles, without a due survey of all the particular cases which may be included in them, is the way to lay a trap for our own understandings, whereby we shall often be taken captives into mistake and falsehood.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### OF BOOKS AND READING.

I. The world is full of books; but there are multitudes which are so ill written, that they were never worth any man's reading; and there are thousands more which may be good in their kind, yet are worth nothing when the occasion is past for which they were written. Others may be valuable in themselves for some special purpose, or in some peculiar science, but are not fit to be perused by any but those who are engaged in that particular science or business. To what use is it for a divine, or a physician, or a tradesman to read

over the huge volumes of reports of cases in the law? or for a lawyer to learn Hebrew, and read the Rabbins? It is of vast advantage for a young man to have the proper books for his reading recommended by a judicious friend.

II. Books of importance of any kind, and especially complete treatises on any subject, should be first read in a more general and cursory manner, to learn a little of what the treatise promises, and what you may expect from the writer's manner and skill. And for this end I would advise that the preface always be read, and a survey taken of the table of contents, if there be one, before the survey of the book. By this means you will not only be better fitted to give the book the first reading, but you will be much assisted in your second perusal of it, which should be done with greater attention and deliberation, and you will learn with more ease and readiness what the author pretends to teach. In your reading, mark what was new or unknown to you before, and review those chapters, pages, or paragraphs. Unless a reader has an uncommon and most retentive memory, I may venture to affirm that there is scarce any book or chapter worth reading once that is not worthy of a second perusal. At least take a careful review of all the lines or paragraphs which you marked, and make a recollection of the sections which you thought truly valuable.

There is another reason, also, why I would choose to take a superficial and cursory survey of a book before sitting down to read it with studious attention; and that is, that there may be difficulties in it which we cannot easily understand and conquer at the first reading, for want of a fuller comprehension of the author's whole scheme. And, therefore, in such treatises we should not stay till we master every difficulty at the first perusal; for perhaps many of these would appear to be solved when we have proceeded further in that book, or would vanish of themselves upon a second reading.

III. If three or four persons agree to read the same book, and each brings his own remarks upon it, at hours appointed for conversation, and they communicate mutually their sentiments on the subject, and debate about it in a friendly manner, this practice will render the reading of any author more abundantly beneficial to each of them.

IV. If several persons engaged in the same study take into their hands distinct treatises on a subject, and appoint a season of communication, they may inform each other in a brief manner concerning the sense, sentiments, and methods of those several authors, and thereby promote each other's improvement, either by recommending the perusal of the same book to their companions, or perhaps by satisfying their inquiries concerning it by conversation, without every one perusing it.

V. Remember that your business in reading or in conversation, especially on subjects of natural, moral, or divine science, is not merely to know the opinion of the author or speaker, for this is but the mere knowledge of history; but your *chief business is to consider whether their opinions are right or not*, and to improve your own solid knowledge on that subject by meditation on the themes of their writing or discourse. Deal freely with every author you read, and yield up your assent only to evidence and just reasoning on the subject.

Here I would be understood to speak only of human authors, and not of the sacred and inspired writings. In these our business is only to find out the true sense, to understand the true meaning of the paragraph and page; our assent then is bound to follow, when we are before satisfied that the writing is divine. Yet I might add, also, that even this is sufficient evidence to demand our assent.

But in the compositions of men, remember you are a man as well as they; and *it is not their reason but your own that*

*is given to guide you* when you arrive at years of discretion, of manly age and judgment.

VI. Let this, therefore, be your practice, especially after you have gone through one course of any science in your academical studies: if a writer on that subject maintains the same sentiments that you do, yet if he does not explain his ideas or prove his positions well, *mark the faults or defects, and endeavor to do better*, either in the margin of your book, or rather in some papers of your own, or at least let it be done in your private meditations. As for instance:

Where the author is obscure, enlighten him: where he is imperfect, supply his deficiencies: where he is too brief and concise, amplify a little, and set his notions in a fairer view: where he is redundant, mark those paragraphs to be retrenched: when he trifles and grows impertinent, abandon those passages or pages: when he argues, observe whether his reasons be conclusive; if the conclusion be true, and yet the argument weak, endeavor to confirm it by better proofs: where he derives or infers any proposition darkly and doubtfully, make the justice of the inference appear, and make further inferences or corollaries, if such occur to your mind: where you suppose he is in a mistake, propose your objections and correct his sentiments: what he writes so well as to approve itself to your judgment, both as just and useful, treasure it up in your memory, and count it a part of your intellectual gains.

Many of these directions may be practised with regard to conversation as well as reading, in order to render it useful in the most extensive and lasting manner.

VII. Other things, also, of the like nature may be usefully practised with regard to the authors which you read. If the method of a book be irregular, reduce it into form, by a little analysis of your own, or by hints in the margin. If those things are heaped together which should be separated, you may wisely distinguish and divide them. If several

things relating to the same subject are scattered up and down separately through the treatise, you may bring them all to one view by references; or if the matter of a book be really valuable and deserving, you may throw it into a better method, reduce it to a more logical scheme, or abridge it into a lesser form. All these practices will have a tendency both to advance your skill in logic and method, to improve your judgment in general, and to give you a fuller survey of that subject in particular.

VIII. If a book has no index to it, or good table of contents, it is very useful to make one as you are reading it: not with that exactness as to include the sense of every page and paragraph, which should be done if you designed to print it; but it is sufficient in your index to take notice only of those parts of the book which are new to you, or which you think well written, and well worthy of your remembrance or review.

Shall I be so free as to assure my younger friends, from my own experience, that these methods of reading will cost some pains in the first year of your study, and especially with the first authors which you peruse in any science, or on any particular subject; but the profit will richly compensate the pains. And in the following years of life, after you have read a few valuable books on any special subject in this manner, it will be easy to read others of the same kind, because you will not usually find very much matter in them which you have not already examined.

If the writer be remarkable for any peculiar excellencies or defects in his style or manner of writing, make just observations upon this also; and whatsoever ornaments you find there, or whatsoever blemishes occur in the language or manner of the writer, you may make just remarks upon them.

Remember that one book read over in this manner, with all this laborious meditation, will tend more to enrich your

understanding than the skimming over the surface of twenty authors.

IX. By perusing books in the manner I have described, you will make all your reading subservient not only to the enlargement of your treasures of knowledge, but also to the improvement of your reasoning powers.

There are many who read with constancy and diligence, and yet make no advances in true knowledge by it. They are delighted with the notions which they read or hear, as they would be with stories that are told; but they do not weigh them in their minds as in a just balance, in order to determine their truth or falsity: they make no observations upon them, or inferences from them. Their eyes slide over the pages, or the words slide over their ears, and vanish like a rhapsody of evening tales, or the shadows of a cloud flying over a green field on a summer's day.

Or if they review them sufficiently to fix them in their remembrance, it is merely with a design to tell the tale over again, and show what men of learning they are. Thus they dream out their days in a course of reading, without real advantage. As a man may be eating all day, and, for want of digestion, is never nourished; so those endless readers may cram themselves in vain with intellectual food, without real improvement of their minds, for want of digesting it by proper reflections.

X. Enter into the sense and arguments of the authors you read; examine all their proofs, and then judge of the truth or falsity of their opinions; and thereby you shall not only gain a rich increase of your understanding, by those truths which the author teaches, when you see them well supported, but you shall acquire also by degrees a habit of judging justly and of reasoning well, in imitation of the good writers whose works you peruse.

This is laborious indeed, and the mind is backward to undergo the fatigue of weighing every argument, and tracing

every thing to its original. It is much less labor to take all things upon trust: believing is much easier than arguing.

I confess, those whose reading is designed only to fit them for much talk and little knowledge, may content themselves to run over authors in a sudden and trifling way; they may devour libraries in this manner, yet be poor reasoners at last, and have no solid wisdom or true learning. The traveller who walks on fair and softly in a course that points right, and examines every turning before he ventures upon it, will come sooner and safer to his journey's end, than he who runs through every lane he meets, though he gallops full speed all the day. The man of much reading, and a large retentive memory, but without meditation, may become, in the sense of the world, a knowing man; and if he converse much with the ancients, he may attain the fame of learning too: but he spends his days afar off from wisdom and true judgment, and possesses very little of the substantial riches of the mind.

XI. *Never apply yourselves to read any author with a determination beforehand either for or against him*, or with a settled resolution to believe or disbelieve, to confirm or to oppose, whatsoever he saith; but always read with a design to lay your mind open to truth, and to embrace it wheresoever you find it, as well as to reject every falsehood, though it appear under ever so fair a disguise. How unhappy are those men who seldom take an author into their hands without having determined before they begin whether they will like or dislike him! They have got some notion of his name, his character, his party, or his principles, by general conversation, or perhaps by some slight view of a few pages; and having all their own opinions adjusted beforehand, they read all that he writes with a prepossession either for or against him. Unhappy those who hunt and purvey for a party, and scrape together out of every author all those things, and

those only, which favor their own tenets, while they despise and neglect all the rest!

XII. Yet take this caution. I would not be understood here, as though I persuaded a person to live without any settled principles at all, by which to judge of men and books and things; or that I would keep a man always doubting about his foundations. The chief things that I design in this advice are these three:

1. *We should read with a just freedom of thought all those books which treat of subjects which admit of doubt and reasonable dispute.* Nor should any of our opinions be so resolved upon, especially in younger years, as to make us unwilling to hear or to bear opposition to them.

2. When we peruse those authors who defend our own settled sentiments, *we should not take all their arguments for just and solid;* but we should make a wise distinction between the corn and the chaff, between solid reasoning and the mere superficial colors of it; nor should we readily accept all their lesser opinions because we agree with them in the greater.

3. When we read those authors who oppose our most certain and established principles, we should be ready to receive any information from them in other points, and not abandon at once every thing they say, though we are well fixed in our opposition to their main point of arguing.

XIII. What I have said hitherto on this subject, relating to books and reading, must be chiefly understood of that sort of books, and those hours of our reading and study, whereby we design to improve the intellectual powers of the mind with natural, moral, or divine knowledge. As for those treatises which are written to direct or to enforce and persuade our practice, there is one thing further necessary; and that is, that when our consciences are convinced that these rules of prudence or duty belong to us, and require our conformity to them, *we should then call ourselves to account, and*

*inquire seriously whether we have put them in practice or not.* We should dwell upon the arguments, and impress the motives and methods of persuasion upon our own hearts, till we feel the force and power of them inclining us to the practice of the things which are there recommended.

If folly or vice be represented in its open colors, or its secret disguises, let us search our hearts and review our lives, and inquire how far we are criminal; nor should we ever think we have done with the treatise while we feel ourselves in sorrow for our past misconduct, and aspiring after a victory over those vices, or till we find a cure of those follies begun to be wrought upon our souls.

In all our studies and pursuits of knowledge, let us remember that virtue and vice, sin and holiness, and the conformation of our hearts and lives to the duties of true religion and morality, are things of far more consequence than all the furniture of our understanding, and the richest treasures of speculative knowledge; and that, because they have a more immediate and effectual influence upon our eternal felicity or eternal sorrow.

XIV. There is yet another class of books, of which it is proper I should say something, while I am treating on this subject; and these are history, poetry, travels, books of diversion or amusement, among which we may reckon also common pamphlets, newspapers, and such like: for many of these, once reading may be sufficient, where there is a tolerably good memory.

When several persons are in company, and one reads to the rest writings of this character, once hearing may be sufficient, provided that every one is so attentive and so free as to make occasional remarks on such lines or sentences, such periods or paragraphs, as in their opinion deserve it. Now all those paragraphs or sentiments deserve remark, which are new and uncommon, are noble and excellent for the matter of them, are strong and convincing for the argument

contained in them, are beautiful and elegant for the language or the manner, or any way worthy of a second rehearsal; and at the request of any of the company let those paragraphs be read over again.

Such parts, also, of these writings as may happen to be remarkably stupid or silly, false or mistaken, should become subjects of an occasional criticism, made by some of the company; and this may give occasion to the repetition of them, for the confirmation of the censure, for amusement or diversion.

Still, let it be remembered that where the historical narration is of considerable moment, where the poetry or oratory shines with some degree of perfection and glory, a single reading is not sufficient to satisfy a mind that has a true taste for this sort of writings; nor can we make the fullest and best improvement of them without proper reviews, and that in our retirement as well as in company.

XV. Among writings of the latter kind we may justly reckon short miscellaneous essays on all manner of subjects; such as the Occasional Papers, the Tatlers, the Spectators, and other books that have been compiled out of the weekly or daily products of the press, wherein are contained a great number of bright thoughts, ingenious remarks, and admirable observations, which have had a considerable share in furnishing the present age with knowledge and politeness.

XVI. Among other books which are proper and requisite, in order to improve our knowledge in general, or our acquaintance with any particular science, it is necessary that we should be furnished with vocabularies and dictionaries of several sorts, namely, of common words, idioms and phrases, in order to explain their sense; of technical words, or the terms of art, to show their use in arts and sciences; of names of men, countries, towns, rivers, and the like. These are to be consulted and used upon every occasion; and never let an

unknown word pass in your reading without seeking for its sense and meaning.

If such books are not at hand, you must supply the want of them as well as you can, by consulting those who can inform you: and it is useful to note down matters of doubt and inquiry in some pocket-book, and take the first opportunity to get them resolved, either by persons or books.

XVII. Be not satisfied with a mere knowledge of the best authors that treat of any subject, instead of acquainting yourselves thoroughly with the subject itself. There are many young students who are fond of enlarging their knowledge of books, who content themselves with a notice of their title-pages, which is the attainment of a bookseller rather than that of a scholar. Such persons are under a great temptation to practise these two follies: 1. To heap up a great number of books at a greater expense than most of them can bear, and to furnish their libraries infinitely better than their understanding; 2. And when they have gotten such rich treasures of knowledge upon their shelves, to imagine themselves men of learning, and take a pride in talking of the names of famous authors, and the subjects of which they treat, without any real improvement of their own minds in true science or wisdom. At best their learning reaches no further than the indexes and tables of contents, while they know not how to judge or reason concerning the matters contained in those authors.

And indeed how many volumes of learning soever a man possesses, he is still deplorably poor in his understanding, until he has made those several parts of learning his own property by reading and reasoning, by judging for himself, and remembering what he has read.

## CHAPTER V.

### JUDGMENT OF BOOKS.

I. If we would form a judgment of a book which we have not seen before, the first thing that offers is the title-page, and we may sometimes learn a little of the import and design of a book thereby; though it must be confessed that titles are often deceitful, and promise more than the book performs. The author's name, if it be known in the world, may help us a little, and lead us to guess in what manner the work is done. A perusal of the preface or the introduction (which I before recommended) may further assist our judgment; and if there be an index of the contents, it will give us still more light.

If we have not leisure or inclination to read over the book itself regularly, then by the titles of the chapters we may be directed to peruse particular chapters or sections, and observe whether there be any thing valuable or important in them. We shall thus find whether the author explains his ideas clearly, whether he reasons strongly, whether he methodizes well, whether his thought and sense be manly, and his manner polite; or, on the other hand, whether he be obscure, weak, trifling, and confused; or, finally, whether the matter may not be solid and substantial, though the style and manner be rude and disagreeable.

II. By having run through several chapters and sections in this manner, we may generally judge whether the treatise be worth a complete perusal or not. But if by such an occasional survey of some chapters our expectation be utterly discouraged, we may well lay aside that book. It can hardly

be valuable if in the seven or eight chapters which we peruse there be but little truth, force of reasoning, beauty, or ingenuity of thought, mingled with much error, ignorance, impertinence, dulness, mean and common thoughts, or railing. Life is too short, and time is too precious, to read every new book quite over, in order to find whether it is worth the reading.

III. There are some general mistakes which persons are frequently guilty of in passing a judgment on the books which they read.

One is this: when a treatise is written tolerably well, we are ready to pass a favorable judgment upon it, and sometimes to exalt its character far beyond its merit, if it agree with our own principles, and support the opinions of our party. On the other hand, if the author be of different sentiments, and espouse contrary principles, we can find neither wit nor reason, good sense nor good language in it; forgetting that a silly author may draw his pen in the defence of certain and infallible truth, or he may attack even gross errors with feeble and ridiculous arguments. Truth in this world is not always attended and supported by the wisest and safest methods; and error, though it can never be maintained by just reasoning, may yet be artfully covered and defended.

IV. Another mistake which some persons fall into is this: when they read a treatise on a subject with which they have but little acquaintance, they find almost every thing new and strange to them. Being greatly entertained and improved by many things which were unknown to them before, they admire the treatise, and commend the author at once. Whereas if they had but attained a good degree of skill in that science, perhaps they would find that the author had written very poorly, that neither his sense nor his method was just and proper, and that he had expressed only what was very common or trivial.

V. But there is a danger of mistake in our judgment of books, on the other hand also; for when we have made ourselves masters of any particular theme of knowledge, and surveyed it long on all sides, there is perhaps scarce any writer on that subject who greatly entertains and pleases us afterwards, because we find little or nothing new in him; and yet, in a true judgment, perhaps his sentiments are most proper and just, his explication clear, and his reasoning strong, and all the parts of the discourse are well connected and set in a happy light; but we knew most of those things before, and therefore they strike us not, and we are in danger of discommending them.

Thus the learned and the unlearned have their several distinct dangers and prejudices ready to attend them in their judgment of the writings of men. These which I have mentioned are a specimen of them, and indeed but a mere specimen; for the prejudices that warp our judgment aside from truth are almost endless.

VI. Yet I cannot forbear to point out two or three more of these follies, that I may attempt something towards the correction of them, or at least to guard others against them.

There are some persons of a forward and lively temper, fond of intermeddling with all appearances of knowledge, who will give their judgment on a book as soon as the title of it is mentioned, for they would not willingly seem ignorant of any thing that others know. And especially if they happen to have any superior character or possessions, they fancy they have a right to talk freely upon every thing that appears, though they have no other pretence to this freedom.

VII. I might here name another class of judges, who will set themselves up to decide in favor of an author, or will pronounce him a mere blunderer, according to the company they have kept, and the judgment they have heard passed upon a book by others, though they have no knowledge of the subject themselves. These, with a fluent and voluble

tongue, become mere echoes of the praises or censures of other men.

VIII. There is yet another mischievous principle which prevails among some persons in passing a judgment on the writings of others, and that is, when from the secret stimulations of vanity, pride, or envy, they despise a valuable book, and throw contempt upon it by wholesale: and if you ask them the reason of their censure, they will tell you, perhaps, that they have found a mistake or two in it, or there are a few sentiments or expressions which do not suit them. It is a paltry humor that inclines a man to rail at any human performance because it is not absolutely perfect.

Wise and just distinctions ought to be made when we pass a judgment on mortal things; but envy condemns by wholesale. Some fibres of it are rooted in almost every man's nature, and it works in a sly and imperceptible manner, and that even in some persons who in the main are men of wisdom and piety. They know not how to bear the praises that are given to an ingenious author, especially if he be living, and of their profession; and therefore they will, if possible, find some blemish in his writings. They will endeavor to diminish the honor of the best treatise that has been written on any subject, and to render it useless by their censures, rather than suffer their envy to lie asleep, and the little mistakes of the author to pass unexposed. Perhaps they will commend the work in general with a pretended air of candor; but pass so many sly and invidious remarks upon it afterwards, as shall effectually destroy all their cold and formal praises.

IX. When a person feels any thing of this invidious humor working in him, he may by the following consideration attempt the correction of it. Let him think how many are the beauties of the author whom he censures, in comparison with his blemishes, and remember that it is a much more honorable and good-natured thing to find out peculiar beauties

than faults: true and undisguised candor is much more amiable and divine a talent than accusation. Let him reflect again, what an easy matter it is to find mistakes in all human authors, who are necessarily fallible and imperfect.

A little wit, or a little learning, with a good degree of vanity and ill-nature, will teach a man to pour out whole pages of remark and reproach upon one real or fancied mistake of a great and good author; and this may be dressed up by the same talents, and made entertaining enough to the world, which loves reproach and scandal. But if the critic would but once make this attempt, and try to outshine the author by writing a better book on the same subject, he would soon be convinced of his own insufficiency, and perhaps might learn to judge more justly and favorably of the performance of other men. Every poor low genius may cavil at what the richest and the noblest has performed; but it is a sign of envy and malice, added to the littleness and poverty of genius, when such a cavil becomes a sufficient reason to pronounce at once against a bright author, or a valuable treatise.

X. Another, and that a very frequent fault, in passing a judgment upon books, is this: that persons spread the same praises or the same reproaches over a whole treatise, and all the chapters in it, which are due only to some of them. They judge, as it were, by wholesale, without making a due distinction between the several parts or sections of the performance; and this is likely to lead those who hear them into dangerous mistakes.

XI. When you hear any person pretending to give his judgment of a book, consider whether he be a capable judge, or whether he may not lie under some unhappy bias or prejudice for or against it, or whether he has made a sufficient inquiry to form just sentiments upon it. Though he be a man of good sense, yet he is incapable of passing a true judgment on a particular book, if he be not well acquainted

with the subject of which it treats, and the manner in which it is written, be it verse or prose. Again, though he be ever so capable of judging, yet you are to consider whether there be any thing in the author, in his manner, in his language, in his opinions, and his particular party, which may warp the sentiments of him that judges, to think well or ill of the treatise, and to pass too favorable or too severe a sentence concerning it. If you find that he is either an unfit judge because of his ignorance or his prejudices, his judgment of that book should go for nothing.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### OF LIVING INSTRUCTIONS AND LECTURES.

I. THERE are few persons of so penetrating a genius, and so just a judgment, as to be capable of learning the arts and sciences without the assistance of teachers. There is scarcely any science that is properly and speedily learned, even by the noblest genius with the best books, without a tutor. Books are a sort of dumb teachers: they point out the way to learning; but if we labor under any doubt or mistake, they cannot always answer sudden questions, or explain present doubts and difficulties: this is properly the work of a living instructor.

II. There are few tutors who are sufficiently learned to sustain all the parts and provinces of instruction. The sciences are numerous, and many of them lie far wide of each other; and it is best to enjoy the instructions of two or three tutors at least. Then we may expect that each will teach the few parts of learning which are committed to his

care in greater perfection. But where this advantage cannot be had with convenience, one superior teacher may supply the place of two or three common instructors.

III. It is not sufficient that instructors be skilful in those sciences which they profess and teach; they should also have skill in the art or method of teaching, and patience in the practice of it. There are some very learned men, who know much, yet have not the talent of communicating their knowledge. They may have an obscure and perplexed way of talking, or show their learning uselessly, making long comments on every word of the book. Others cannot condescend to young beginners, and are soon angry and impatient, and cannot bear with the questions of a young, inquisitive, and sprightly learner; or perhaps they skim over a science in a slight and superficial survey, and never lead their disciples into the depths of it.

IV. A good tutor is one who can and will apply himself with diligence and concern, and indefatigable patience, to effect what he undertakes; to teach his disciples, and see that they learn; to adapt his way and method, as near as may be, to the various dispositions, as well as to the capacities of those whom he instructs, and to inquire often into their progress and improvement.

And he should take particular care of his own temper and conduct, that there be nothing in him or about him which may set a bad example; nothing that may savor of a haughty temper, or a mean and sordid spirit; nothing that may expose him to the aversion or to the contempt of his scholars, or create a prejudice in their minds against him and his instructions. If possible, he should have so much of a natural candor and sweetness combined with all the improvements of learning, as may convey knowledge to the minds of his disciples with a gentle insinuation and sovereign delight, and tempt them to the highest improvement by a resistless and insensible force. But I shall have occasion to say more on

this subject, when I come to speak more directly of the methods of communicating knowledge.

V. The learner should attend with constancy and care to all the instructions of his tutor; and if he happens to be at any time unavoidably hindered, he must endeavor to retrieve the loss by double industry for time to come. He should always recollect and review his lectures, read over some other author or authors upon the same subject, confer upon it with his instructor, or with his associates, and write down the clearest result of his present thoughts, reasonings, and inquiries, which he may have recourse to hereafter, either to re-examine them and to apply them to proper use, or to improve them further to his own advantage.

VI. A student should never satisfy himself with bare attendance on the lectures of his tutor, unless he clearly takes up his sense and meaning, and understands the things which he teaches. A young pupil should so behave himself as to gain the affection of his instructor, that upon every occasion he may, with the utmost freedom, ask questions, and talk over his own sentiments, his doubts, and difficulties with him, and in an humble and modest manner desire the solution of them.

VII. Let the learner endeavor to maintain an honorable opinion of his instructor, and heedfully listen to his instructions, as one willing to be led by a more experienced guide; and though he is not bound to accept every sentiment of his tutor, yet he should so far comply with him as to resolve upon a just consideration of the matter, and try and examine it thoroughly with an honest heart, before he presume to determine against him.

VIII. It is a frequent folly in young learners to fancy themselves wiser than those who teach them. At the first view, or upon a very little thought, they think they can discern weakness or mistake in what their teacher asserts, and reject at once sentiments and doctrines which their teachers

have determined, perhaps, after years of mature study, careful observation, and much prudent experience.

IX. It is true teachers and masters are not infallible, nor are they always in the right; and it must be acknowledged, it is a matter of some difficulty for younger minds to maintain a just veneration for the authority and advice of their parents and the instructions of their tutors, and yet at the same time secure to themselves a just freedom in their own thoughts. We are sometimes too ready to imbibe all their sentiments without examination, if we reverence and love them; or, on the other hand, if we take all freedom to contest their opinions, we are sometimes tempted to cast off that love and reverence to them which God and nature dictate. Youth is ever in danger of these two extremes.

X. But I think I may safely conclude thus: Though the authority of a teacher must not absolutely determine the judgment of his pupil, yet young and inexperienced learners should pay all proper deference to the instructions of their parents and teachers, short of absolute submission to their dictates. Yet still we must maintain this: that *they should never receive* any opinion into their assent, unless sufficient evidence of it is first given to their own reason.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### RULES OF IMPROVEMENT BY CONVERSATION.

I. If we would improve our minds by conversation, it is a great happiness to be acquainted with persons wiser than ourselves, and to enjoy their conversation frequently. If they happen to be a little reserved, use all obliging methods to draw out of them what may increase your own knowledge.

II. Whatsoever company you are in, waste not the time in trifling and impertinence. If among children, talk with them according to their capacity, mark the buddings of infant reason: observe the different motions and distinct workings of the animal nature and of the mind, as far as you can discern them: take notice by what degrees the little creature grows up to the use of his reasoning powers, and what early prejudices beset and endanger his understanding. By this means you will learn to address yourself to children in a way conducive to their benefit, and perhaps you may derive from them something for your own entertainment and advantage.

III. If you happen to be in company with a merchant or a sailor, a farmer or a mechanic, lead them into a discourse of the matters of their peculiar province or profession; for every one knows, or should know, his own business best. In this sense a common mechanic may be wiser than the philosopher. By this means you may gain some improvement in knowledge from every one you meet.

IV. Confine not yourself always to one sort of company, or to persons of the same party or opinion, either in matters of learning, religion, or civil life, lest, if you should happen to be educated in early mistake, you should be confirmed and established in it by conversing only with persons of the same sentiments. A free and general conversation with men of various countries and of different parties, opinions, and practices, so far as it may be done safely, is of excellent use to undeceive us in many wrong judgments which we may have framed, and to lead us to juster thoughts. Conversation with foreigners especially has a happy influence in enlarging our minds and setting them free from errors and prejudices.

> Fool that I was! I thought imperial Rome
> Like market towns, where once a week we come,
> And thither drive our tender lambs from home.

V. In mixed company, among acquaintances and strangers, endeavor to learn something from all. Be swift to hear; but be cautious of your tongue, lest you betray your ignorance or offend some who are present. The Scriptures severely censure those who speak evil of the things they know not. Acquaint yourself with persons and parties which are far distant from your common life and customs: this is a way whereby you may form a wiser opinion of men and things. Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good, is a divine rule, and it comes from the Father of light and truth.

VI. Be not frightened nor provoked at opinions different from your own. Some persons are so confident they are in the right, that they will not come within the hearing of any notions but their own: they have their little province in the intellectual world, where they fancy the light shines while all the rest is in darkness. They never venture into the ocean of knowledge, nor survey the riches of other minds, which are as solid and useful, and perhaps are finer gold than what they ever possessed.

VII. Believe that it is possible to learn something from persons much below yourself. We are all shortsighted, and our views are, at best, narrow and limited. We often see but one side of a matter, not extending our sight far enough to reach every thing that has a connection with the thing we talk of. We see but in part, and know but in part; therefore it is no wonder that we do not form right conclusions. Even the proudest admirer of himself might find it useful to consult with others, though of inferior capacity and penetration. We have a different prospect of the same thing, if I may so speak, according to the different position of our understandings towards it: a weaker man may sometimes light on notions which have escaped a wiser, and which the wiser man might make a happy use of, if he would condescend to notice them.

VIII. It is of considerable advantage, when we are pursuing any difficult subject, to have a society of ingenious friends at hand, to whom we may propose it; for every man has a different genius and turn of mind, whereby the subject proposed will be shown in various lights: it will, perhaps, be represented in all its forms, and every side of it turned to view, that a juster judgment may be framed.

IX. To make conversation more valuable and useful, whether it be in a designed or an accidental visit, after the necessary salutations are finished, and the stream of common talk begins to hesitate, let some person take a book which may be agreeable to the company, and by common consent let him read a paragraph or two, or a few pages, until some word or sentence gives an occasion for any of the company to offer a thought relating to the subject. Interruption of the reader should be no blame; for conversation is the business. Whether it be to confirm what the author says or to improve it, to enlarge upon or to correct it, to object to it or to ask any question that is akin to it, let every one that pleases add his opinion, and so promote the conversation. When the discourse sinks again, or diverts to trifles, let him that reads pursue the page, until occasion is given by a word or sentence for a new discourse to be started, and that with the utmost ease and freedom. Such a method as this would prevent the hours of a visit from running all to waste; and by this means, even among scholars, they would seldom find occasion for that too just and bitter reflection, "I have lost my time in the company of the learned."

By such a practice as this, young ladies may very honorably and agreeably improve their hours: while one applies herself to reading, the others employ their attention, even among the various artifices of the needle; but let all of them make occasional remarks or inquiries. This will guard a great deal of precious time from fashionable trifling, impertinence, or scandal.

Observe this rule in general: whensoever it lies in your power to lead the conversation, let it be directed to some profitable point of knowledge or practice, so far as may be done with propriety; and let not the discourse and the hours be suffered to run loose without aim or design. And when a subject is started, pass not hastily to another, before you have brought the present theme of discourse to some tolerable issue, or there is a joint consent to drop it.

X. Attend with sincere diligence while any one of the company is declaring his sense of the question proposed; hear the argument with patience, though it differ ever so much from your sentiments, for you yourself are very desirous of being heard with patience by others who differ from you. Let not your thoughts be active and busy all the while to find out something to contradict, and by what means to oppose the speaker, especially in matters which are not brought to an issue. This is a frequent and unhappy temper and practice. You should rather be intent and solicitous to take up the mind and meaning of the speaker, zealous to seize and approve all that is true in his discourse: nor yet should you want courage to oppose where it is necessary; but let your modesty and patience, and a friendly temper, be as conspicuous as your zeal.

XI. When a man speaks with much freedom and ease, and gives his opinion in the plainest language of common sense, do not presently imagine you shall gain nothing by his company. Sometimes you will find a person who, in his conversation or his writings, delivers his thoughts in so plain, so easy, so familiar and perspicuous a manner, that you both understand and assent to every thing he says, as fast as you read or hear it: hereupon some hearers have been ready to conclude in haste, Surely this man says none but common things: I knew as much before, or I would have said all this myself. This is a frequent mistake.

XII. If any thing seem dark in the discourse of your com-

panion, so that you have not a clear idea of what is spoken, endeavor to obtain a clearer conception of it by a proper manner of inquiry. Do not charge the speaker with obscurity, either in his sense or his words, but entreat his favor to relieve your own want of penetration, or to add an enlightening word or two, that you may take up his whole meaning.

If difficulties arise in your mind, and constrain your dissent to the things spoken, represent what objection some persons would be ready to make against the sentiments of the speaker, without telling him you oppose. This manner of address carries something more modest and obliging in it, than to appear to raise objections of your own by way of contradiction to him that spoke.

XIII. When you are forced to differ from him who delivers his sense on any point, agree with him as far as you can, and represent how far you agree; and if there be any room for it, explain the words of the speaker in such a way that you can in general assent to them, and so agree with him, or at least, by a small addition or alteration of his sentiments, show your own sense of things. It is the practice and delight of a candid hearer, to make it appear how unwilling he is to differ from him that speaks. Let the speaker know that it is nothing but truth constrains you to oppose him; and let that difference be always expressed in few and civil and chosen words, such as may give the least offence.

And be careful always to remember Solomon's rule, and let a speaker fairly finish before you reply; "for he that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."

A little watchfulness, care, and practice in younger life will render all these things easy, familiar, and natural to you, and will grow into habit.

XIV. As you should carry about with you a constant and sincere sense of your own ignorance, so you should not be afraid nor ashamed to confess this ignorance, by taking all

proper opportunities to ask and inquire for further information. Never remain in ignorance for want of asking.

Many a person might have arrived at a considerable degree of knowledge, if he had not been full of self-conceit, and imagined that he knew enough already, or else was ashamed to let others know that he was ignorant. God and man are ready to teach the meek and the humble; but he that fancies himself to know any particular subject well, or that will not venture to ask a question about it, is not likely to put himself into the way of improvement by inquiry and diligence. A fool may be "wiser in his own conceit than ten men who can render a reason;" and such a one is very likely to be always a fool.

XV. Be not too forward, especially in the earlier part of life, to determine any question in company with an infallible and peremptory sentence, nor to speak with assuming airs and a decisive tone of voice. A young man, in the presence of his elders, should rather hear and attend, and weigh the arguments which are brought for the proof or refutation of any doubtful proposition; and when it is his turn to speak, propose his thoughts rather in the way of inquiry. By this means your mind will be kept in a fitter temper to receive truth, and you will be more ready to correct and improve your own sentiments, where you have not been too positive in affirming them. But if you have decided the point, you will find a secret unwillingness to retract, though you should feel a conviction that you were in the wrong.

XVI. Be not fond of disputing every thing pro and con, nor indulge yourself in showing your talent of attacking and defending. This temper and practice will lead you far out of the way of knowledge, and divert your honest inquiry after truth. In set disputes, every little straw is often laid hold on to support our own cause; every thing that can be drawn in any way to give color to our argument is advanced, and that perhaps with vanity and ostentation. This puts

the mind out of a proper posture to seek and receive the truth.

XVII. Do not bring a party spirit into a free conversation which is designed for mutual improvement in the search of truth. Take heed of allowing yourself in those self-satisfied assurances which keep the doors of the understanding barred against the admission of any new sentiments. Let your soul be ever ready to hearken to further discoveries, from a constant and ruling consciousness of our present fallible and imperfect state; and make it appear to your friends, that it is no hard task to you to learn and pronounce those little words, "I was mistaken," how hard soever it be for the mass of mankind to pronounce them.

XVIII. As you may sometimes raise inquiries for your own instruction and improvement, and draw out the learning, wisdom, and fine sentiments of your friends, who perhaps may be too reserved or modest; so, at other times, if you perceive a person unskilful in conversation or debate, you may, by questions aptly proposed in the Socratic method, lead him into a clearer knowledge of the subject: then you become his instructor, in such a manner as may not appear to make yourself his superior.

XIX. Take heed of affecting always to shine in company above the rest, and to display the riches of your own understanding or your oratory, as though you would render yourself admirable to all that are present. This is seldom well taken in polite company: much less should you use such forms of speech as would insinuate the ignorance or dulness of those with whom you converse.

XX. Though you should not affect to flourish in a copious harangue and a diffusive style in company, yet neither should you rudely interrupt and reproach him that happens to use it: but when he has done speaking, reduce his sentiments into a more contracted form; not with a show of correcting, but as doubtful whether you hit upon his true sense or not.

Thus matters may be brought more easily from a wild confusion into a single point, questions may be sooner determined, and difficulties more easily removed.

XXI. Be not so ready to charge ignorance, prejudice, or mistake upon others, as you are to suspect yourself of it; and in order to show how free you are from prejudices, learn to bear contradiction with patience. Let it be easy to you to hear your own opinion strongly opposed, especially in matters which are doubtful and disputable. Give a patient hearing to arguments on all sides; otherwise, you give the company occasion to suspect that it is not the evidence of truth that led you into this opinion, but some lazy anticipation of judgment, some beloved presumption, some long and rash possession of a party scheme, in which you desire to rest undisturbed. If your assent has been established upon just and sufficient grounds, why should you be afraid to let the truth be put to the trial of argument?

XXII. Banish utterly out of all conversation, and especially out of all learned and intellectual conference, every thing that tends to provoke passion. Let no sharp language, no noisy exclamations, no sarcasms, or biting jets be heard among you; no perverse or invidious consequences be drawn from each other's opinions, and imputed to the person: let there be no wilful perversion of another's meaning; no sudden seizure of a lapsed syllable to play upon it, nor any abused construction of an innocent mistake: suffer not your tongue to insult a modest opponent who appears to yield; let there be no crowing and triumph, even where there is evident victory on your side. *All these things are enemies to friendship, and the ruin of free conversation.* The impartial search of truth requires all calmness and serenity and candor; mutual instruction can never be attained in the midst of passion, pride, and clamor, unless we suppose, in the midst of such a scene, there is a loud and penetrating lecture read by both sides, on the folly and shameful infirmities of human nature.

refore, any unhappy word shall
give you a reasonable disgust,
be it ever so just, and command
nto silence, lest you cancel the
r that hour, and transform the
e mean and vulgar form of re-
man who begins to break the
all under the shame and convic-
if he has any thing ingenuous
ot be sufficient, let a grave ad-
tle turn of wit, with an air of
isputer an occasion to stop the
if not to retract the indecency

candid and obliging manner in
re the art of pleasing address,
as when you learn; and when
you assert or prove. This de-
be attained without a diligent
as are here laid down, and a
of them.

what sort of companions you
on and advantage of the mind,
uch as, by their brightness of
study, or by their superior ad-
eculiar excellency in any art,
ay be capable of administering
be sure to maintain and keep
al character always, lest while
you wander in quest of intellectual gain, you fall into the contagion of irreligion and vice. No wise man will venture into a house infected with the plague, in order to see the finest collections of any virtuoso in the world.

XXVI. Nor is it every sober person of your acquaintance, no, nor every man of bright parts, or rich in learning, that is

fit to engage in free conversation for the inquiry after truth. Let a person have ever so illustrious talents, yet he is not a proper associate for such a purpose, if he lie under any of the following infirmities:

1. If he be exceedingly reserved, and has either no inclination to discourse, or no tolerable capacity of speech and language for the communication of his sentiments.

2. If he be haughty and proud of his knowledge, imperious in his airs, and is always fond of imposing his sentiments on all the company.

3. If he be positive and dogmatical in his own opinions, and will dispute to the end; if he will resist the brightest evidence of truth, rather than suffer himself to be overcome, or yield to the plainest and strongest reasonings.

4. If he be one who always affects to outshine all the company, and delights to hear himself talk and flourish upon a subject, and make long harangues, while the rest must be silent and attentive.

5. If he be a person of whiffling and unsteady turn of mind, who cannot keep close to a point of controversy, but wanders from it perpetually, and is always solicitous to say something, whether it be pertinent to the question or not.

6. If he be fretful and peevish, and given to resentment upon all occasions: if he knows not how to bear contradiction, or is ready to take things in a wrong sense: if he is swift to feel a supposed offence, or to imagine himself affronted, and then break out into a sudden passion, or retain silent and sullen wrath.

7. If he affect wit on all occasions, and is full of his conceits and puns, quirks or quibbles, jests and repartees: these may agreeably entertain and animate an hour of mirth, but they have no place in the search after truth.

8. If he carry always about him a sort of craft and cunning and disguise, and act rather like a spy than a friend. Have a care of such a one as will make an ill use of freedom

in conversation, and immediately charge heresy upon you, when you happen to differ from those sentiments which authority or custom has established.

In short, you should avoid the man, in such select conversation, who practises any thing that is unbecoming the character of a sincere, free, and open searcher after truth.

Now, though you may pay all the relative duties of life to persons of these unhappy qualifications, and treat them with decency and love, so far as religion and humanity oblige you, yet take care of entering into a free debate on matters of truth or falsehood in their company, and especially about the principles of religion. I confess, if a person of such a temper happens to judge and talk well on such a subject, you may hear him with attention, and derive what profit you can from his discourse; but he is by no means to be chosen for a free conference in matters of learning and knowledge.

XXVII. While I would persuade you to beware of such persons, and abstain from too much freedom of discourse amongst them, it is very natural to infer that you should watch against the working of these evil qualities in your own breast, if you happen to be tainted with any of them. Men of learning and ingenuity will justly avoid your acquaintance, when they find such an unhappy and unsocial temper prevailing in you.

XXVIII. To conclude: when you retire from company, converse with yourself in solitude, and inquire what you have learned for the improvement of your understanding, or for the rectifying of your inclinations, for the increase of your virtues, or the amelioration of your conduct and behavior. If you have seen some of your company candid, modest, humble in their manner, wise and sagacious, just and pious in their sentiments, polite and graceful, as well as clear and strong in their expression, and universally acceptable and lovely in their behavior, endeavor to impress their manner upon your memory, and treasure it up for imitation.

XXIX. If the laws of reason, decency, and civility have not been well observed amongst your associates, take notice of those defects for your own improvement; and from every occurrence of this kind remark something to imitate or to avoid, in elegant, polite, and useful conversation. Perhaps you will find that some persons present have really displeased the company, by an excessive and too visible an affectation to please; that is, by giving loose to servile flattery or promiscuous praise: while others were as ready to oppose and contradict every thing that was said.

Some may have deserved just censure for a morose or affected taciturnity, and others have been anxious and careful lest their silence should be attributed to a want of sense, and therefore they have ventured to make speeches, though they had nothing to say which was worth hearing. Perhaps you will observe that one was ingenious in his thoughts, and bright in his language, but he was so full of himself that he spoke too long, and did not allow equal liberty or time to his associates.

You will remark that another was full charged to let out his words before his friends had done speaking, or impatient of the least opposition to any thing he said. You will remember that some persons have talked at large and with great confidence of things which they understood not, and others counted every thing tedious and intolerable that was spoken upon subjects out of their sphere, and they would fain confine the conference entirely within the limits of their own narrow knowledge and study. The errors of conversation are almost infinite.

XXX. By a review of such irregularities as these you may learn to avoid the follies which spoil good conversation, or make it less agreeable and useful. By degrees you will acquire that delightful and easy manner of address and behavior which will render your company everywhere desired and beloved.

# CHAPTER VIII.

## PRACTICAL HINTS.—HOW AND WHEN TO SPEAK, AND WHAT TO SAY.

1. First, if you would be good talkers, you must form now —for you can do it only now—habits of correct and easy pronunciation. The words which you miscall now will cost you great pains in after-life to pronounce aright, and you will always be in danger of returning inadvertently to your old pronunciation. There are two extremes which you ought equally to shun. One is that of carelessness; the other, that of affected precision. The last fault always suggests vanity and pedantry.

2. Shun all ungrammatical expressions and vulgarisms, which always grate harshly upon the ear. If you permit yourself to use them now, you will probably never get rid of them. I know a venerable and accomplished lawyer, at the head of his profession and moving in the most refined society for half a century, who to this day says *haint* for *has not*, having acquired the habit when a school-boy.

3. Another offence against good taste is the use, especially by young ladies, of extravagant expressions—splendid for pretty, magnificent for handsome, and the like. This habit has a very bad moral bearing. Exaggerated speech makes one careless of the truth. We can hardly trust the testimony of a person who in conversation is indifferent to the import of words. I am acquainted with persons who have lost reputation for veracity solely through the habit of extravagant expression.

4. It may not be amiss to notice a class of phrases often

employed to fill out a sentence, such as—*I declare—That's a fact—Did you ever!—Just so.* All these forms of speech disfigure conversation and give unfavorable impressions as to the good-breeding of the person using them.

5. When you are in company talk often, but never long. In that case, if you do not please you are sure not to tire your hearers. There are many persons who, though they have nothing to talk of, never know when to leave off talking. There are some who labor under so great and insatiable a desire for talking, that they will even interrupt others when about to speak.

6. Tell stories seldom, and only when they are short and apt. Omit every circumstance that is not material, and beware of digressions. Have the whole tale well settled in your own mind, with every name and expression ready at hand, that you may not be obliged at every turn to call for assistance to help you through.

7. If you are to relate any thing said or done by a number of persons, avoid too frequent use of the expression "he said," or "he replied." They are indefinite: the pronouns often agree equally with all the individuals, and their use leads only to ambiguity.

8. There is nothing more impolite than seeming inattention to the person addressing us. I have seen people who, instead of looking at and attending to one addressing them, would fix their eyes upon the ceiling, or some other part of the room, or look out of the window, or play with the dog. Nothing more than this discovers a little and frivolous mind; and nothing is more offensively ill-bred.

9. Neither is it consistent with good manners, when another is speaking, to divert attention from the speaker by calling it in another direction: unless the company be so large as to leave him still a sufficiently good audience.

10. Another ill habit with many is to break in upon the speech of another before he has finished, which is as much as

to say, "That is not worth our time; listen to me." And sometimes if one be somewhat slow of speech they will supply him with words, or even take the speech out of his mouth, and finish the story themselves, as if they alone were rich in words and competent in wisdom.

11. Never display your learning except on particular and necessary occasions. Reserve it for suitable times, and then let it be drawn from you, rather than exhibited with vain ostentation.

12. Upon all occasions avoid, if possible, speaking of yourself. But if in narrative we are obliged to mention ourselves, care should be taken not to drop a single word that can be construed into self-commendation or a desire for compliment. If we are silent, neither envy nor ridicule will allay the approbation we really deserve; but if we are our own panegyrists, however artfully disguised, every one will conspire against us, and we shall miss the very end we aimed at.

13. Take care never to seem dark and mysterious: this is not only a very unamiable but a very suspicious character. If you seem mysterious with others, they will be really so with you.

14. Never talk of your own, or of others' domestic affairs. Yours are of no interest to them, and theirs should not be to you. Besides, the subject is of so delicate a nature, that with the best of intentions it is a chance if we do not make some mortifying mistake, or wound the feelings of some one of the company.

15. In our intercourse with mankind we ought to be cautious not to obtrude our advice too officiously upon others, nor show too deep an interest in their affairs. To give advice unasked is, in effect, to declare that we are wiser than the persons advised, and to reproach them with ignorance and inexperience. This freedom ought to be taken only with those to whom we are united by the most intimate friendship, or those committed to our care and instruction.

16. Never indulge in general reflections upon whole classes of men, or associations, or societies; for thereby you needlessly make many enemies. Among all associations there are, as everywhere in the world, both good and bad, all actuated by the same passions and sentiments as mankind generally, and it is as unjust as imprudent to speak to the discredit of all because of a few. Judge of individuals from your knowledge of them, not from their sex or profession.

17. Private scandal should never be the subject of conversation; for though the defamation of others may gratify a present ill-will, yet reflection will always disincline us to the acquaintance of the scandal-monger. We never feel ourselves safe in the hands of one who has defamed others. Moreover, in scandal, as in robbery, the receiver is reputed as bad as the thief.

18. Neither ought we to indulge in mimicry or buffoonery merely to elicit laughter. Mimicry, which is the common and favorite amusement of low minds, is the contempt of elevated ones. We should neither practise it nor applaud it in others. Besides, it is little less than downright insult to the person mimicked. The manner in which conversation is embellished by some, by distortions of the mouth, or eyes, or face, are the tricks of a clown rather than the accomplishments of a gentleman or lady.

19. Special care ought always to be taken never to allude in the remotest way to any thing that may be unpleasant in the history or unbecoming in the personal appearance or dress of any of the company. If any one is so unfortunate as to possess any disability or disfigurement, no one but the most thoughtless or uncultivated would make it the subject of remark. There is much we must learn not to see, as well as many things not to know.

20. Conversation should never be allowed to fall into separate or little knots, so that one here or one there should remain alone or be excluded altogether. It should be carried on in

appropriate tones of voice, somewhat raised or strengthened for the aged and those who may not hear readily; quick, firm, and spirited for those in middle age, with faculties in full strength; and somewhat gentler to the young, that they be not checked, and slower, that they may have time to frame an answer. Should the conversation become dull at any moment, or should even an awkward pause ensue, seem not to notice it, but rather try to gather up the broken thread, or to introduce some new topic.

21. Be not too ready to find some point of disagreement. There are those who seem ever on the watch to catch up some word whereon they may hang a controversy. Before we assume that we do not take the same view of the subject that a speaker does, we should carefully examine the terms he uses, to see if we attach the same meaning to them, and to ascertain how far our thoughts do agree. Few persons are more unwelcome than those who are ever ready to say, "Hold there, I don't agree with you."

22. But if our opinions are altogether diverse, our dissent should be so expressed as to cast no reflection upon our antagonist. We should accustom ourselves to an elegant, modest, and pleasing manner of expression, such as will have nothing offensive to those with whom we disagree. Thus, instead of saying, "Sir, you do not understand me," say rather, "I believe I do not express myself as clearly as I should." It is better, also, to say, "Let us consider the matter more carefully whether we view it alike," than, "It is not so," or, "You mistake."

23. It is a polite and amiable practice to make some excuse for another, even in those instances where we are sure he is in error. And when he alone is under misapprehension, we may approach him much more agreeably and effectively by representing the mistake as common to us both, and then venture to reprove him in some such expression as this, "We are under a grave mistake here."

## CHAPTER IX.

### OF STUDY OR MEDITATION.

It has been shown in the foregoing chapters, that neither our own observations, nor reading the labors of the learned, nor attendance on the best lectures of instruction, nor enjoying the brightest conversation, can ever make a man truly wise, without the labor of his own reason. It now remains to give some hints how to employ our thoughts, what sort of subjects we should meditate on, in what manner we should regulate our studies, and how we may improve our judgment, so as in the most effectual and compendious way to attain such knowledge as may be most useful.

The first direction for youth is this: learn betimes to distinguish between words and things. Get clear and plain ideas of the things you are set to study. Do not content yourselves with mere words and names, lest your labored improvements only amass unintelligible phrases, and you feed upon husks instead of kernels. This rule is of the greatest use in every science.

But the greatest and most common danger is in the sacred science of theology, where terms and phrases have been pronounced divine and orthodox, which yet have no meaning in them. The scholastic divinity would furnish us with numerous instances of this folly; and yet for many ages truth and heresy have been determined by such senseless tests, and by words without ideas: such Shibboleths as these have decided the secular fates of men. To defend them, was all piety and pomp and triumph; to despise them, or to doubt or to deny

them, was often torture and death. A thousand thank-offerings are due to that Providence which has delivered our age and our nation from these absurd iniquities!

Let not young students apply themselves to search out abstruse matters, far above their reach, or spend their labor in any peculiar subjects, for which they have not the advantages of necessary antecedent learning, or books, or observations. Let them not be too hasty to know things above their present powers, nor plunge their inquiries at once into the depths of knowledge, nor begin to study any science in the middle of it; this will confound rather than enlighten the understanding. Such practices may discourage the mind by attempts above its power; they may balk the understanding, and create an aversion to future diligence, and perhaps by despair may forbid the pursuit of that subject forever afterwards: as a limb overstrained by lifting a weight above its power may never recover its former agility and vigor.

Nor yet let any student, on the other hand, frighten himself at every turn with insurmountable difficulties, nor imagine that the truth is wrapped up in impenetrable darkness. These are formidable spectres which the understanding raises sometimes to flatter its own laziness. Those things which in a remote and confused view seem very obscure and perplexed may be approached by gentle and regular steps, and may then unfold and explain themselves at large to the eye. The hardest problems in geometry, and the most intricate schemes or diagrams, may be explicated and understood step by step.

In learning any new thing, there should be as little as possible proposed to the mind at once, and that being understood and fully mastered, proceed to the next adjoining part yet unknown. This is a slow, but safe and sure way to arrive at knowledge. If the mind apply itself at first to easier subjects, and things near akin to what is already known, and then advance to the more remote and knotty parts of knowledge by slow degrees, it would be able in this manner to

cope with great difficulties, and prevail over them with amazing and happy success.

Engage not the mind in the pursuit of too many things at once; especially such as have no relation to each other. This will distract the understanding, and hinder it from attaining perfection in any subject of study. Such a practice gives a slight smattering of several sciences, without any solid and substantial knowledge of them, and without any real and valuable improvement; and though two or three sorts of study may be usefully carried on at once, to entertain the mind with variety, that it may not be over-tired with one sort of thoughts, yet a multitude of subjects will too much distract the attention, and weaken the application of the mind to any one of them.

Where two or three sciences are pursued at the same time, if one of them be dry, abstracted, and unpleasant, as logic, metaphysics, law, languages, let another be more entertaining and agreeable, to secure the mind from weariness and aversion to study. Delight should be intermingled with labor as far as possible, to allure us to bear the fatigue of dry studies the better. Poetry, practical mathematics, history, and the like, are generally esteemed entertaining studies, and may be happily used for this purpose. Thus while we relieve a dull and heavy hour by some alluring employments of the mind, our very diversions enrich our understandings, and our pleasure is turned into profit.

In the pursuit of any valuable subject, keep the end always in view, and be not diverted from it by every trifle you meet in the way. Some persons have such a wandering genius that they are ready to pursue every incidental theme or occasional idea, till they have lost sight of the original subject. These are the men who, when they are engaged in conversation, prolong their story by dwelling on every incident, and swell their narrative with long parentheses, till they have lost their first designs; like a man who is sent in

quest of some great treasure, but steps aside to gather every flower he finds, or stops to dig up every shining pebble he meets, till the treasure is forgotten and never found.

Let every particular study have due and proper time assigned it, and let not a favorite science prevail with you to lay out such hours upon it as ought to be employed upon the more necessary and more important affairs or studies of your profession. When you have, according to the best of your discretion and circumstances, fixed proper hours for particular studies, endeavor to observe them; not, indeed, with a superstitious preciseness, but with some good degree of regular constancy. Order and method in a course of study save much time and insure large improvements, and will have a happy influence to secure you from trifling and wasting your minutes in impertinence.

Do not apply yourself to any study at one time longer than the mind is capable of giving a close attention to it without weariness or wandering. Do not over-fatigue the spirits at any time, lest the mind be seized with a lassitude, and grow tired of the subject before you have finished it.

In the beginning of your application to any new subject, be not too uneasy under present difficulties, nor too importunate and impatient for answers and solutions to any questions that arise. Perhaps a little more study, a little further acquaintance with the subject, a little time and experience, will solve the difficulties, untie the knots, and make your doubts vanish. Your inquiries are perhaps too early, and you have not yet learned those principles upon which the solution of the difficulty depends.

Do not expect to arrive at certainty in every subject which you pursue. There are many things wherein we must be content with probability, where our best light and reasonings will reach no further. We must balance arguments as justly as we can, and where we cannot find weight enough on either side to determine the scale with sovereign force and assur-

ance, we must content ourselves, perhaps, with a small preponderance. This will give us a probable opinion, and probabilities are sufficient for the daily determination of most actions in human life.

It is admirably well expressed by a late writer: "When there is a great strength of argument set before us, if we will refuse to do what appears most fit for us, till every little objection is removed, we shall never take one wise resolution as long as we live."

Many students hurry from one study to another, content merely with the name of having been through the book, when in fact they know little or nothing of the subject. This is a common fault in many schools.

After the foundations of knowledge are well laid, the student should choose those studies which he has some aptness for, those in which he is satisfied he can make some fair proficiency, and resolve to make himself master of them. It is better to be master of one science than to have dabbled with twenty to no good purpose.

If we would fully understand any science, we must be sure we comprehend each sentence as we proceed. Never be content to commit to memory what you do not understand.

A little time with close application is of more value than hours of listless pretence. It is earnest attention that imprints ideas in the memory. A lesson thoroughly examined three days in succession is seldom forgotten.

Make it a point, therefore, to go over each day the two previous days' lessons. Even if the first day's study has implanted it fully in the memory, yet recall it all carefully, that it may be brought entirely under control, and be at instant command.

The mind, as well as the body, has need of rest, and hence relaxation must be intermingled with application. From half an hour to an hour is as long a period as youth can give unflagging attention to mental effort. Whenever there is

any sense of weariness, study should be laid aside for a few minutes for bodily exercise or rest.

The morning hours are generally of much the greatest value for intellectual effort. The mental energies are often exhausted to such a degree at nightfall, that further study is of little value. Avoid all late hours of study. When the student "consumes the midnight oil," he is also consuming the best part of his own intellectual and physical force.

Rely chiefly upon yourself. Take studies not in advance of your years, and then work your own way. Call upon an instructor only when, after repeated and faithful and earnest trials, you find you cannot comprehend the subject. Remember that when you have mastered a difficulty or solved a problem unaided, you have gained intellectual strength as well as victory.

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## CHAPTER X.

### OF FIXING THE ATTENTION.

A STUDENT should labor, by all proper methods, to acquire fixation of thought. Attention is necessary in order to the improvement of our minds. The evidence of truth does not always appear immediately, nor strike the mind at first sight. It is arrived at only by long attention and inspection, and it is for want of it that we judge falsely of many things. We make haste to determine upon a slight and a sudden view, we confirm our guesses which arise from a glance, we pass a judgment while we have but a confused or obscure perception, and thus plunge ourselves into mistakes. This is like a man who, walking in a mist, or being at a great distance from any visible object (suppose a tree, a man, or a church),

judges much amiss of the figure and situation and color of it; whereas, if he would but withhold his judgment till he came nearer, or stay till clearer light comes, he would secure himself from mistake.

Now, in order to gain facility of attention, we may observe these rules:

I. Get a good liking to the study you would pursue. We may observe, that there is not much difficulty in confining the mind to contemplate what we have a great desire to know.

Mathematical studies have a strange influence in fixing the attention, and giving steadiness to a wandering disposition, because they deal much in lines, figures, and numbers, which affect and please the sense and imagination.

Histories have a strong tendency the same way, for they engage the mind by a variety of sensible occurrences: when it has begun, it knows not how to leave off; it longs to know the final event, through a natural curiosity that belongs to mankind.

Voyages and travels, and accounts of strange countries and strange appearances, will assist in this work. This sort of study detains the mind by the perpetual occurrence and expectation of something new, which always strikes the imagination agreeably.

II. Sometimes we may make use of sensible things and pictures for the illustration of abstract notions. Thus diagrams greatly assist the mind in astronomy and philosophy; and the emblems of virtues and vices may happily teach children, and pleasingly impress useful moral ideas on young minds, which, perhaps, might be conveyed to them with much more difficulty by abstract discourses.

I confess, in this practice of representing moral subjects by pictures, we should be cautious lest we so far immerse the mind in corporeal images, as to render it unfit to take in an abstract idea, or cause it to form wrong conceptions of im-

material things. This practice, therefore, is rather to be used at first, in order to get a fixed habit of attention, and in some cases only; but it should never be our constant way and method of pursuing moral, abstract, and spiritual themes.

III. Apply yourself to those studies, and read those authors who draw out their subjects in a chain of connected reasonings, wherein succeeding parts of the discourse are naturally and easily derived from those which go before. Several of the mathematical sciences, if not all, are useful for this purpose. This method will render the labor of study delightful to a rational mind, and will fix the powers of the understanding with strong attention to their proper operations by the very pleasure of it. Labor itself is pleasure, is a happy proposition wheresoever it can be applied.

IV. Do not choose your constant place of study by the excellence of the prospect. Too much light, or a variety of objects which strike the eye or the ear, especially if they are ever in motion or often changing, have a natural and powerful tendency to distract the mind from the steady pursuit of any subject, and the mind gets thereby a habit of silly curiosity and impertinence, of trifling and wandering.

V. Be not in too much haste to come to the determination of a difficult or important point. Think it worth your waiting to find out truth. Do not give your assent to either side of a question too soon, merely because the study of it is long and difficult. Rather be contented with ignorance for a season, and continue in suspense till by attention and meditation and due labor you have found sufficient evidence to sustain one side. Some are so fond of knowing a great deal at once, and so love to talk of things with freedom and boldness before they truly understand them, that they scarcely ever allow themselves time and attention enough to search a matter through and through.

VI. Have a care of indulging the more sensual passions and appetites of animal nature; they are great enemies to

attention. Let not the mind of a student be under the influence of any warm affection for things of sense, when he comes to engage in the search of truth, or the improvement of his understanding. A person under the power of love or fear or anger, great pain or deep sorrow, has so little government of his soul, that he cannot keep it attentive to the proper subject of his meditation. The passions call away the thoughts with incessant importunity towards the object that excited them; and if we indulge their frequent rise and roving, we shall thereby procure an unsteady and inattentive habit of mind.

VII. It is very useful to fix and engage the mind in the pursuit of any study by a consideration of the divine pleasures of truth and knowledge—by a sense of our duty to God—by a delight in the exercise of our intellectual faculties—by the hope of future service to our fellow-creatures, and glorious advantage to ourselves both in this world and that which is to come. These thoughts, while they move our affections, do it with a proper influence. They assist and promote our attention, rather than disturb or divert it from the subject of our present and proper meditations.

A soul inspired with the fondest love of truth, and the warmest aspirations after sincere felicity and celestial beatitude, will keep all its powers attentive to the incessant pursuit of them: passion is then refined, and consecrated to its divinest purposes.

## CHAPTER XI.

### OF ENLARGING THE CAPACITY OF THE MIND.

THERE are three conditions which in an especial manner make that amplitude or capacity of mind which is one of the noblest characters belonging to the understanding.

1. When the mind is ready to take in great and sublime ideas without pain or difficulty.

2. When the mind is free to receive new and strange ideas, upon just evidence, without great surprise or aversion.

3. When the mind is able to conceive or survey many ideas at once without confusion, and to form a true judgment derived from that extensive survey.

The person who wants either of these characteristics may, in that respect, be said to have a narrow genius. Let us diffuse our meditations a little upon this subject.

I. That is an ample and capacious mind which is ready to take in vast and sublime ideas without pain or difficulty. Persons who have never been used to any thing but the common and obvious affairs of life, generally have acquired such a narrow or contracted habit of mind that they are not able to admit large and noble thoughts; they are ready to make their domestic, daily, and familiar images of things the measure of all that is, and all that can be.

II. Those who confine themselves within the circle of their hereditary ideas and opinions, and who never give themselves leave so much as to examine any thing besides the dictates of their family, or sect, or party, are justly charged with a narrowness of mind. This should be corrected by hearing and reading accounts of different parts of the world, and

the histories of past ages, and of distant nations and countries, especially the more enlightened portions of mankind. Nothing tends in this respect so much to enlarge the mind as travelling. Where our condition of life does not grant us this privilege, we must endeavor to supply the want of it by books.

It is the same narrowness of mind that awakens the surprise and aversion of some persons, when they hear of doctrines and schemes in human affairs, or in religion, quite different from those they have embraced. Perhaps they have been trained from infancy in one set of notions, and their thoughts have been confined to a single tract, without ever hearing or knowing what other opinions are current among mankind. Or they have seen all notions, except their own, represented in a false and malignant light; whereupon they judge and condemn at once every sentiment but those which their party receives. They have so rooted themselves in the opinions of their party, that they cannot hear an objection with patience, nor can they bear a vindication, or so much as an apology, for any principles not their own: all the rest is nonsense or heresy, folly or blasphemy.

This defect, also, is to be relieved by free conversation with persons of different sentiments: this will teach us to bear with patience a defence of opinions contrary to our own. We should also read the objections against our own tenets, and view the principles of other parties, as they are represented in their own authors, and not merely in the citations of those who would confute them. We should take an honest and unbiased survey of the force of reasoning on all sides, and bring all to the test of unprejudiced reasoning and divine revelation. Note, this is not to be done in a rash and self-sufficient manner; but with an humble dependence on divine wisdom and grace, while we walk among snares and dangers.

By such a free converse with persons of different sects

(especially those who differ in particular forms of Christianity, but agree in the great and necessary doctrines of it), we shall find that there are persons of good sense and virtue, persons of piety and worth, persons of much candor and goodness, who belong to different parties, and have imbibed sentiments opposite to each other. This will soften the roughness of an unpolished soul, and enlarge the avenues of our charity towards others, and incline us to receive them into all the degrees of unity and affection which the word of God requires.

III. The capacity of the understanding includes yet another qualification, and that is, an ability to receive many ideas at once without confusion. The ample mind takes a survey of several objects with one glance, and keeps them all within sight, that they may be compared together: it forms just judgments, and draws proper inferences from this comparison, even to a great length of argument, and a chain of demonstrations.

The narrowness that belongs to human souls in general is a great imperfection, and an impediment to wisdom and happiness. There are few persons who can contemplate or practise several things at once. Our faculties are very limited, and while we are intent upon one part or property of a subject, we have but a slight glimpse of the rest, or we lose it out of sight. But it is a sign of a large and capacious mind, if we can with one single view take in a variety of objects; or at least when the mind can apply itself to several objects with so swift a succession, and in so few moments, that it attains almost the same ends as if all were done in the same instant.

This is a necessary qualification in order to great knowledge and good judgment; for there are many things in human life, in religion, and in the sciences, which have various circumstances and relations attending them; and without a survey of all those ideas which stand in connec-

tion with and relation to each other, we are often in danger of passing a false judgment on the subject proposed for our consideration. It is for this reason that there are so many controversies in matters of religion, as well as in affairs of civil government.

It is owing to the narrowness of our minds that we are exposed to the same peril in the matters of duty and prudence. In many things which occur, we ought not only to consider the naked action itself, but the persons who act, the persons towards whom, the time when, the place where, the manner how, the end for which the action is done, together with the effects that must or that may follow, and all other surrounding circumstances: these things must necessarily be taken into view, in order to determine whether the action, which may be indifferent in itself, be either lawful or unlawful, good or evil, wise or foolish, decent or indecent, proper or improper.

Let me give a plain instance for the illustration of this matter. Mario kills a dog, which, considered merely in itself, seems to be an indifferent action. Now the dog was Timon's, and not his own: this makes it look unlawful. But Timon bade him do it: this gives it an appearance of lawfulness again. It was done at church, and in time of divine service: these circumstances added, cast on it an air of irreligion. But the dog flew at Mario, and put him in danger of his life: this relieves the seeming impiety of the action. Yet Mario might have escaped by flying thence: therefore the action appears to be improper. But the dog was known to be mad: this further circumstance made it necessary that the dog should be slain, lest he might worry the assembly, and do much mischief. Yet again, Mario killed him with a pistol, which he happened to have in his pocket since yesterday's journey: now hereby the whole congregation was terrified and discomposed, and divine service was broken off: this carries an appearance of great impropriety in it. But after

all, when we consider a further circumstance, that Mario, being thus violently assaulted by a mad dog, had no way of escape, and had no other weapon about him, it seems to take away all the colors of impropriety or unlawfulness, and to allow that the preservation of one or many lives will justify the act as wise and good. Now all these concurrent appendices of the action ought to be surveyed, in order to pronounce with justice and truth concerning it.

There are very many occurrences in private life, in domestic affairs, in traffic, in civil governments, in courts of justice, in schools of learning, which have so many complicated circumstances, aspects, and situations, with regard to time and place, persons and things, that it is impossible for any one to pass a right judgment concerning them, without entering into most of these circumstances, comparing and balancing them all aright.

Whence, by the way, I may take occasion to say, how many thousands there are who take upon themselves to pass censures on the personal and the domestic actions of others, who pronounce boldly on the affairs of the public, and determine the justice or madness, the wisdom or folly of national administrations, of peace or war, whom neither God nor men ever qualified for such a post of judgment. They are not capable of entering into the numerous concurring springs of action, nor have they ever taken a survey of the twentieth part of the circumstances necessary for such judgments or censures.

It is the narrowness of our minds, as well as the vices of the will, that oftentimes prevents us from taking a full view of the complicated circumstances that belong to human actions: thence it comes to pass that there is so little right judgment, so little justice or prudence, practised among the mass of mankind; thence arise infinite reproaches and censures, alike foolish and unrighteous. You see, therefore, how needful and happy a thing it is to possess some measure of

this amplitude of soul, in order to make us wise and just and prudent.

I confess, this capacity of mind is in a great measure the gift of nature. The genius of some persons is so poor and limited, that they can hardly take in the connection of two or three propositions, unless it be in matters of sense, which they have learned by experience. They are utterly unfit for speculative studies; it is hard for them to discern the difference between right and wrong in matters of reason, on any abstract subjects. These ought never to set up for scholars, but apply themselves to those arts and professions of life which are to be learned at an easier rate, by slow degrees and daily experience.

Others have a mind a little more capacious, and can take in the connection of a few propositions pretty well; but if the chain of consequences be a little prolix, they are confounded. If persons of this kind ever devote themselves to science, they should be well assured of a solid and sturdy constitution of body, and be well resolved to bear the fatigue of hard labor and diligence in study.

But, in the third place, there are some of so bright and happy a genius, and so ample a mind, that they can take in a long train of propositions, if not at once, yet in a very few moments, and judge well concerning the dependence of them. They can survey a variety of complicated ideas without fatigue or disturbance; and a number of truths offering themselves, as it were, at one view to their understanding, do not perplex or confound them. These make great men.

Now, though there may be much owing to nature, yet experience assures us, that any degree of capacity and extent of thought may be increased by diligence and application, by frequent exercise, and the observation of such rules as these:

I. Labor by all means to gain an attentive and patient temper of mind, a power of confining and fixing your thoughts

on any appointed subject until you have surveyed it on every side and in every situation, and run through the several powers, parts, properties and relations, effects and consequences of it. He whose thoughts are fluttering and wandering, and cannot be fixed attentively to a few ideas successively, will never be able to survey many and various objects distinctly at once, but will certainly be overwhelmed and confounded with the multiplicity of them. The rules for fixing the attention in the former chapter are proper to be consulted here.

II. Accustom yourself to clear and distinct ideas in every thing you think of. Be not satisfied with obscure and confused conceptions of things, especially where clearer may be obtained; for one obscure or confused idea, especially if it be of great importance in the question, intermingled with many clear ones, and placed in a variety of aspects towards them, will be in danger of spreading confusion over the whole scene of ideas, and thus may have an unhappy influence in overwhelming the understanding with darkness and perverting the judgment. A little black paint will spoil twenty gay colors.

Consider yet further, that if you content yourself frequently with words instead of ideas, or with cloudy and confused notions of things, how impenetrable that darkness will be, and how vast and endless that confusion which must surround and involve the understanding, when many of these obscure and confused ideas come to be set before the soul at once; and how impossible it will be to form a clear and just judgment about them.

III. Use all diligence to acquire and treasure up a large store of knowledge: take every opportunity to add something to your stock; and by frequent recollection fix it in your memory: nothing tends to confirm and enlarge the memory like a frequent review of its possessions. This will gradually give the mind a faculty of surveying many objects

at once, as a room that is richly adorned and hung round with a great variety of pictures, strikes the eye almost at once with all that variety, especially if they have been well surveyed one by one at first.

Here note, that by acquiring a rich treasure of knowledge, I do not mean single ideas only, but also propositions, observations, and experiences, with reasonings and arguments upon the various subjects that occur among natural and moral, common or sacred affairs. Then when you are called to judge concerning any question, you will have some principles of truth, some useful axioms and observations, always ready at hand to direct and assist your judgment.

IV. It is necessary that we should, as far as possible, lay up new ideas in a regular order, and arrange our acquisitions under proper heads. We should inure our minds to method and order continually; and when we take in any fresh ideas, occurrences, and observations, we should dispose of them in their proper places, and see how they accord with the rest of our notions on the same subjects,—as a scholar would dispose of a new book on a proper shelf among its kindred authors.

V. Since method is necessary for the improvement of the mind, in order to make your treasure of ideas most useful, observe in all pursuits of truth and acquirements of rational knowledge a regular progressive method. Begin with the most simple, easy, and obvious ideas; then by degrees join two and three and more of them together. Thus the complicated ideas, growing up under your eye and observation, will not occasion the same confusion of thought that they would if they were all offered to the mind at once. An eminent example of this appears in the study of arithmetic. If a scholar, just admitted into school, observes his master performing an operation in division, his head is at once disturbed and confounded with the manifold comparisons of the numbers of the divisor and dividend, the multiplication of one

and the subtraction of another; but if he begin regularly at addition, and so proceed by subtraction and multiplication, he will in a few weeks be able to take in an intelligent survey of all the operations in division, and to practise them himself with ease and pleasure, though each of them at first seemed all intricacy and confusion.

## CHAPTER XII.

### OF IMPROVING THE MEMORY.

We are said to remember any thing, when the idea of it arises in the mind, with a consciousness at the same time that we have had this idea before. Memory is the power of retaining what we learn, and of recalling it when desired.

A good memory has these several qualifications:

1. It is ready to receive and admit, with great ease, ideas both of words and things. 2. It treasures up these ideas in great number and variety. 3. It is strong and durable to retain words or thoughts which are committed to it. 4. It is faithful and active to suggest, upon proper occasion, whatever has been recommended to its care or treasured up in it.

Now in every one of these qualifications memory may be injured or improved: yet I shall not insist distinctly on these particulars, but only, in general, propose a few rules or directions whereby this noble faculty, in all its branches and qualifications, may be preserved and cultivated, and show what are the practices that have been found of happy influence in promoting this purpose.

There is one great and general direction which pertains to the improvement of the memory, as well as of other powers,

and that is, to keep it always in due and proper exercise. Many acts by degrees form a habit, and thereby the ability or power is strengthened, and made more ready to appear again in action.

Our memories will be in a great measure moulded and formed, improved or injured, according to the exercise we give them. Those who are wont to converse or read about few things only, will retain but little in their memory. Those who are used to remember things but for an hour, and charge their memories with them no longer, will retain them but an hour before they vanish.

Yet there should be a caution given: the memory of a child or an infirm person should not be overburdened; for, like a limb or a joint, it may be overstrained by being too much loaded, and its natural power never recovered. Teachers should wisely judge of the power and constitution of youth, and impose no more on them than they are able to bear with cheerfulness and improvement.

And particularly they should take care that the memory of the learner be not too much crowded with a multitude of ideas at one time: this is the way to remember nothing—one idea effaces another. An overgreedy grasp does not retain the largest handful. The exercise of memory with a due moderation, is a general rule for its improvement.

The particular rules are these:

1. Due attention and diligence to learn and know things, which we would commit to memory, is a rule of great necessity. When the attention is strongly fixed on any particular subject, all that is said concerning it makes a deep impression upon the mind. There are some persons who complain that they cannot remember discourses which they hear, when, in truth, their thoughts are wandering half the time, or they hear with such coldness and indifference, that it is no wonder the things which are read or spoken make but a slight impression on the mind, and get no firm footing in the memory.

If we would maintain a permanent remembrance of the things which we read or hear, it is needful that we should engage our delight and pleasure in them, and use the methods which have been prescribed to fix the attention. Sloth, indolence, and idleness will no more bless the mind with intellectual riches, than they will fill the hand with gain or the field with corn.

Let it be added, also, that not only the slothful and the negligent deprive themselves of proper knowledge, but those also who have active spirits, yet are ever skimming over the surface of things with a volatile temper. There must be labor and diligence and close attention to particular subjects of thought and inquiry, to impress what we read or think upon the memory.

2. Clear and distinct apprehension of the things which we commit to memory is necessary in order to make them remain there. If we would remember words, or learn the names of persons or things, we should have them recommended to our memory by a clear and distinct pronunciation, spelling, or writing. Every thing which we learn should be conveyed to the understanding in the plainest expressions, that we may not mistake what we desire to remember. For this reason, take heed that you do not put up with words instead of thoughts, mere sounds instead of real sentiments and ideas. Many a lad forgets what has been taught him, merely because he never well understood it; he never clearly and distinctly took in the meaning of those sounds and syllables which he was required to get by heart.

3. Method and regularity in the things we commit to memory are necessary in order to make them take effectual possession of the mind, and abide there. Though systematic learning is decried by some, it is certainly the happiest way to furnish the mind with a variety of knowledge.

Whatsoever you would trust to your memory, let it be disposed in a proper method, connected well together, and

referred to distinct and particular heads or classes, both general and particular.

4. A frequent review, and careful repetition of the things we would learn, and an abridgment of them in a narrow compass for this end, has a great influence in fixing them in the memory.

Even when a person is hearing a sermon or a lecture, he may give his thoughts leave now and then to step back so far as to recollect the several heads of it from the beginning, before the lecture or sermon is finished: the omission or the loss of a sentence or two among the amplifications of a subject is richly compensated by preserving in the mind the method and order of the whole discourse in its most important branches.

To fix in the memory the discourses we hear, or what we design to speak, it is useful to contract them into brief compends, and to review them often. Lawyers and divines who have need of such assistances, write down short notes or hints of the principal heads of what they desire to commit to memory in order to preach or plead; for such abstracts or epitomes may be soon reviewed, while the several amplifying sentiments or sentences will be easily invented or recollected in their proper places. The art of shorthand writing is of excellent use for this as well as for other purposes.

Do not plunge yourself into business or study, amusement or recreation, immediately after you have attended upon instruction, if you can well avoid it. Get time, if possible, to recollect the things you have heard, that they may not be washed away from the mind by a torrent of other occurrences or engagements, nor lost in the crowd or clamor of other more importunate affairs.

Talking over with your companions the things which you have read, on the first proper opportunity you have for it, is a most useful manner of review or repetition, in order to

fix them upon the mind. Teach your younger friends, and you will establish your own knowledge while you communicate it to them.

5. Pleasure and delight in the things we learn give great assistance towards the remembrance of them. Whatsoever, therefore, you desire that a child should commit to memory, make it as pleasant to him as possible; endeavor to search his genius and his temper, and let him take in the instructions you give him or the lessons you appoint him, as far as may be, in a way suited to his natural inclination.

6. The memory of useful things may receive considerable aid if they are thrown into verse; for the numbers and measures and rhyme have considerable influence upon mankind, to make them receive with ease the things proposed to their observation, and to preserve them longer in their remembrance. How many there are of the common maxims of human life which, taught in early years by the help of rhyme, have been like nails fastened in a sure place, and riveted by daily use!

When you would remember new things or words, endeavor to associate and connect them with some well-known words or things which are fixed and established in your memory. This association of ideas is of great importance and force, and may be of excellent use in many instances. One idea which is familiar to the mind, connected with others which are new and strange, will generally bring those new ideas into easy remembrance.

It is also by this association of ideas that we may best imprint any new idea upon the memory, by joining with it some circumstance of the time, place, or company wherein we first observed or learned it. When we would recover an absent idea, it is useful to recollect those circumstances. The substance will many times be recovered and brought to the thoughts by recollecting the shadow. A man recurs to our fancy by remembering his garment, his size or stature, his

office or employment: a beast, bird, or fish, by its color, figure, or motion, by the cage, courtyard, or cistern wherein it was kept.

To this head, also, we may refer that remembrance of names and things which may be derived from our recollection of their likeness to other things which we know; either their resemblance in name, character, form, accident, or any thing that belongs to them. An idea or word which has been lost or forgotten has often been recovered by hitting upon some other kindred word or idea which has the nearest resemblance to it, and that in the letters, syllables, or sound of the name, as well as properties of the thing.

8. In cases wherein it may be done, seek after a local memory, or a remembrance of what you have read by the side or page where it is written or printed, whether the right or the left, whether at the top, the middle, or the bottom, whether at the beginning of a chapter or a paragraph, or the end of it. It is often of advantage, for this reason, to accustom one's self to books of the same edition; and it has been of constant and special use to divines and others to be furnished with several Bibles of the same edition; that wheresoever they are, whether in their chamber, parlor, or study, in the younger or elder years of life, they may find the chapters and verses standing in the same parts of the page.

9. Let every thing we desire to remember be fairly and distinctly written and divided into periods, with large characters in the beginning; for by this means we shall the more readily imprint the matter and words on our minds, and recollect them with a glance, the more remarkable the writing appears to the eye. The sense of sight conveys ideas to the mind better than any other; and what we have seen is not so soon forgotten as what we have only heard.

Under this head we may take notice of the advantage which the memory gains by having the several objects of our

learning drawn out into schemes and tables; matters of mathematical science and natural philosophy are not only understood, but preserved in the memory, by figures and diagrams. The situation of the several parts of the earth are better learned by one day's conversing with a map or a sea-chart, than by reading the description of their situation a hundred times in books of geography.

I might add here, also, that once writing over what we design to remember, and giving due attention to what we write, will better fix it in the mind than reading it five times. And in the same manner, a learner may much more speedily advance himself in the knowledge of geography by drawing the figures of all the parts of the world by imitation, than by many days' survey of a map of the world so printed.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### OF SELF-CONTROL.

THE ability of the human mind to accomplish any peculiar result, is called a faculty or power: as the faculty of *reason*, or the power of *judgment*.

These powers are as numerous as the capabilities of the mind; but for our present purposes they may be regarded as belonging to three classes—the passions, the reason, and the moral sense. Each of these classes has its own laws of growth and action.

The passions are those elements of our natures which express themselves in the words, *I want*, and which incite us to labor to attain what we desire. If we had no wants there would be no incentive to action, as we can hardly conceive

of a person's laboring to accomplish something when he wants nothing.

Reason is that power of the mind which expresses itself in the words, *I think*. We often think in obedience to our wants, but the wanting and the thinking are very distinct and different states of mind. Wants arise chiefly from the relation of mind and body; but thoughts seem almost wholly independent of any such relation.

Moral sense is our perception of right and wrong. Though in many cases it is very similar to reason, all intelligent minds readily distinguish between thinking and the sense of guilt, when we have done wrong.

In the natural growth of mind, these three classes of faculties do not manifest themselves at the same time, nor with equal force. Mental growth consists both in the extension of the powers already possessed, and in the awakening of new ones.

First in order come the passions. In early life the mind is led chiefly by its wants. Active, energetic, full of life and vivacity, with novelty and interest attaching to every thing its eyes behold or its ears arrest, childhood's wants are incessant and endless; whilst its powers of thought are feeble, and its sense of right indistinct. Hence childhood rushes heedlessly in the pursuit of what it desires, to think of it only when too late, and to frame excuses only when the deed is done.

In assigning mental tasks, this constitution of the early mind should never be overlooked. The child has a retentive memory of names and forms, with but little mental power; and hence such studies as involve any extent of reasoning or of the application of laws or principles, are wholly unsuited to children, because wholly beyond their powers.

The facts of geography, of animal and vegetable life, of the sciences, and of the use of words, are readily learned, and with much interest; but the committing to memory of

rules, and attempts at their application, are not only useless but discouraging and harmful, because the faculties needed in such exercises are yet undeveloped.

Still greater care is needed in the culture of the moral sense. In the administration of discipline, it is of the utmost importance that the question at issue should be fully within the grasp of the child's feeble and uncertain moral perceptions. No greater wrong can be done to a child than to inflict punishment for an act of the nature of which it has no distinct impression. What may appear clearly wrong to us, may be very indistinctly so to them, and, perhaps, only so because it is forbidden. It is instruction and encouragement that the young need more than chastisement. Punishment, where the wrong is not fully and clearly felt, awakens no moral sentiment—it begets merely fear and hatred.*

The passions being thus the most powerful of our early impulses, it is to be expected that children will frequently yield to them in opposition to reason and conscience; nor will the considerate teacher or parent overlook this in his judgment upon the faults and failings of the young.

Secondly. With the advancing years of youth, the powers of reason and moral sense are more completely unfolded. But passion, powerful through years of growth, does not readily relinquish its supremacy, but often impels us towards actions, against the voice of judgment and the remonstrance of conscience.

The contest between these conflicting elements of our nature determines, to a large extent, the shape of our afterlives. On the one side, we are bidden to follow the blind impulses within us, to eat and drink at the caprice of appetite, to take our ease at the behest of idleness, to accumulate

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* "I have never observed other effects of whipping, than to render children more cowardly or more wilful and obstinate."

MONTAIGNE.

at the command of avarice, or to do harm at that of revenge; while on the other hand, we are counselled to act with wisdom, and to follow the inflexible rule of right. If we yield to the former, life is open to every excess and every misfortune; but if, with persistent resolution, we determine to be guided by the higher elements of our being, all that is good and desirable in human life will be placed within our grasp.

This ability or power to hold the passions and appetites in check, and to listen to the suggestions of our higher faculties, is self-control.

Want of self-control is therefore a failure to guide and direct ourselves, and is the giving up to be governed by instincts which are bestowed as guides only for childhood.

If on the passing away of this early stage of life, we do not install as supreme the newer powers conferred upon us, we remain children in mind, acting with childish wisdom, and led by childish impulses, whatever our years and however mature our bodies.

A successful or a noble life under such circumstances can no more be expected than a safe voyage across the ocean with a child at the helm.

How shall youth attain to this self-control? Few questions of greater importance can demand our attention.

First. The elements of our natures, denominated passions and appetites, are not to be regarded as bad, vicious, or wicked, but as good, useful, and necessary. They are beneficial, however, only when under control, and in their proper places. They are like fire, without which life could hardly be sustained, but which, if it once gets the mastery, carries ruin and devastation with it.

Anger is the natural resentment the child feels at insult or injury, and in obedience to which, instantly flies at the offender for punishment. In maturity, the resentment at the offence is the same, but instead of yielding to the passion, we consider how and to what extent it is best to administer

punishment, having in view both our own future safety and the benefit of the offender.

Second. It is to be remembered that these powers were given us to act just as they do, and to be controlled just as they are controlled by the wise and good. However strong they may be, therefore, and however often they get the advantage, they were designed to be subservient to the other faculties, and can, with due care, always be brought into subjection. Let no youth, even for a moment, suppose that, however hasty or violent his disposition, it cannot be brought fully within his management. This untamed spirit within us is like that in the untamed colt, which under judicious training is softened down into the kind, gentle, and willing companion of man. We must, however, not expect too much at once; we must be patient, and be content with gradual improvement.

Third. It being settled that this part of our mental nature is of the utmost value, and that it was intended to act in obedience to the other parts, we must resolutely resolve to bring it into such obedience without delay. Such a resolution firmly made, and persistently carried out, never fails. It is true that, under severe provocation, we may sometimes forget ourselves and yield to passion, yet if we persevere, we shall ultimately be rewarded with complete victory.

Fourth. Practical suggestions.

1. When about to do any act, let the first question be, *Is it right?* If it is not clearly right, let that be the end of it. If it meets the approval of our moral sense, so that we feel assured it is right, it then appeals to our judgment to determine whether it is wise or judicious. And when we feel it both right and judicious, we are then prepared to consider the question, "How is it to be accomplished?"

Thus if we are confronted in a secluded place by a ruffianly looking man, we may be apprehensive that he means to do us harm; yet upon a mere suspicion we should not feel that

we had a right to injure or disable him. But if he should demand our money, we should at once recognize our right to resist the robbery by any injury we might inflict, even to the taking of his life. But if he held a loaded pistol, and we had none, we should feel that though we had an unquestioned right to resist, it would not be judicious under the circumstances. But if we also had a loaded pistol in our pocket, the question then fairly before us would be, how to manage to discharge ours first.

And this is the order in which we should meet every proposed act: 1. Is it right? 2. Is it wise? 3. How is it to be done?

2. When we are conscious that we have done wrong, we ought frankly to admit to ourselves that it is wrong, and resolve to avoid similar error hereafter. It is well, also, for us to consider how we came to be led into the error, that we may learn to be on our guard. If we have injured any one in our hasty action, either in good name or property, we ought promptly to express our regret, and repair, as far as possible, the injury done.

The following incident in General Washington's early life well illustrates his power of self-control. Being in the market-place at Alexandria, some words passed between him and a butcher, whereupon the latter dealt him a blow that felled him to the ground. Washington immediately withdrew; but on next market-day, making his way to the butcher, said, "I have been thinking of the occurrence between us here on last market-day, and have come *to apologize to you for what I said.*"

Whilst most persons would have thought only of retaliation for the indignity, Washington thought chiefly of his own acts. He was unwilling that any wrong which he had committed should remain unrepaired, however great the wrong done him.

This power of self-control lay at the foundation of that

character which made the American people feel that it was safe to trust their liberties with him. Solomon says: "He that ruleth his spirit, is mightier than he that taketh a city."

3. If we have been wronged by another, we should guard against cherishing a spirit of revenge. We may properly desire to punish him, or have him punished, yet only so far as to insure his good behavior hereafter. If, however, he comes to us and expresses his regret, and endeavors, as far as is possible, to repair the injury done, we ought readily and cheerfully to forgive him, and dismiss all unkindly feeling. We must never forget that we are to forgive as we hope to be forgiven.

4. If in an unguarded moment, under especial provocation, anger should overcome us, the great rule then is, *Do nothing, say nothing.*

We may not, under unlooked-for attacks, always be able to control our impulses of resentment, but we can control our actions and our words. The great rule of safety in such moments is, "In anger do nothing."

Not only do nothing and say nothing, but make no resolutions. Hold your mind in a state of inaction until it is restored to its wonted placidity.

It is related of Plato, one of the wisest of the Greeks, that being displeased with a servant on one occasion, he was about to chastise him, when he bethought himself that he was angry. Instantly checking himself, he stood with his hand raised as in the act of striking. A friend seeing him a long time in that position, asked him why he stood thus? Plato replied, "I am punishing an angry man."

5. When irritating or offensive words are addressed to us, it often requires the greatest self-possession and forbearance not to reply in a similar temper; yet it is a very poor reason why we should be rude or ill-mannered, because another is. Never return insult for insult, or railing for railing. Let your inflexible rule be, never to make a reply under provoca-

tion or excitement: however much we may feel injured or wronged, it will bring no relief to know that we have also debased ourselves. When we have become calm, and have had sufficient time for thought, then we may make such reply as may seem fitting.

6. A very common form of want of self-control is exhibited in peevishness, fretfulness, and irritability. Many persons yield to these childish feelings without ever seeming to use the least effort to correct them. Life is full of unlooked-for events, undesirable as well as desirable. To the ungoverned mind, the undesirable become constant sources of annoyance and irritation; but to the well-regulated and disciplined they come with no power to disturb or disquiet. It is the part of wisdom to look for, to expect, and to prepare for these petty occurrences as a part of our daily life.

It may aid us somewhat in correcting this fretful disposition to recollect that if the event had occurred as we desired, the result might have been far worse than now.

Another good rule is to refrain from expressing our ill-feeling, to hold it in check, while we seek some benefit likely to accrue from what has displeased us.

7. Learn to see the good in every event and person, and to cover the evil. This is a most invaluable rule. Every individual and every object has deficiencies as well as excellencies; and inasmuch as the contemplation of virtue and excellence induces the same qualities in the beholder, it is of the greatest advantage to gain the power of discovering the good in every person and every action. Scarcely less valuable is the desire not to discern the evil.

8. Never speak of the faults or follies of others. If it is undesirable to know their weaknesses, much more so is it to display them before the public. There are few less enviable persons than those who busy themselves in picking flaws in the characters of their associates and companions. There are few more despicable; yet the greatest care is

needed, lest we ourselves do what we so much despise in others.

Finally, be not discouraged by frequent failures. Recollect that the impulses which you are endeavoring to check are naturally the strongest in youth, and will most likely often overcome your good resolutions, but that every effort at control makes them weaker and these stronger, and that, ultimately, if you persevere, these will obtain complete ascendency. But there must be a resolute perseverance, a determination to be governed no longer by these inferior impulses.

These efforts are like those of the skater, who, when he first steps upon the ice, finds that every time he moves his foot he is likely to fall, and in spite of every precaution and care, he is sometimes unable to prevent it; yet with every fall and every slip, he learns better how to use the skates and to keep in position, till at last, by these very exercises, he becomes master of the new circumstances, and with them, of all the additional powers and pleasures they bring.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### A CHEERFUL DISPOSITION.

The amount of happiness which a man experiences in this life, depends more upon the condition of his mind than upon his outward circumstances. Happiness can exist only in a contented mind; and contentment comes neither of wealth nor poverty, but of the ability to be satisfied with what we have.

The positions to which we are born are exceedingly diverse, but not the amount of happiness to which we are heirs.

Whether we are children of luxury or want, of ease or toil, there is far less difference in the amount of actual enjoyment, than these diverse conditions would seem to indicate.

The great sources of happiness are health, home, and friends; but the amount of happiness enjoyed depends altogether upon the mind. A contented and cheerful disposition finds happiness in the coarsest fare, the lowliest cot, and in the simplest acts of kindness; but neither elegance nor ease can bring pleasure to one that is not contented.

Thus it appears that the greatest amount of happiness of which our lives are capable, is to be attained by the culture of the mind, and not by the accumulation of wealth.

Life is an unceasing effort to gain happiness and to avoid misery; but if in all our toil we seek for happiness at the wrong source, we can hope for little else than disappointment. The cultivation of a cheerful and contented mind is an element of education that should not be left unconsidered.

The leading quality of such a mind is a readiness to be pleased with the events of life as they come—a promptness to find the good in every occurrence.

We are constantly laying plans for the future—what we shall do to-morrow, or next week, or next year. Some of our plans succeed; many fail. Many events occur against our wishes—our cherished schemes are overthrown. Now, as it is impossible for us to prevent these results, it is the part of wisdom to accept them readily and cheerfully.

We should reflect that our plans may not have been the best: that they might have brought evils which we had not foreseen: that what has occurred may in the end prove to be better than that which we proposed.

Thus shall we learn the great lesson of cheerful contentment amid life's ever-changing scenes.

But there are some dispositions which, either through natural tendency or want of proper training, cannot thus

readily yield to unlooked-for events, nor readily give up their cherished designs.

Such is the *foreboding* disposition, which is always anticipating evil—always fearing something will turn out ill.

It is true that we do not enjoy unmixed good. Evil is ever at hand to be guarded against the best we can. But when due care is exercised, most of the events of life are good; and we are justified in trusting that those which are to happen will also be good: not in assuming that evil is continually at hand. To apprehend evil where there is no just ground for it, is only to make ourselves ministers of unhappiness to ourselves and to others.

There are those in every community who believe themselves upright and praiseworthy, who seem to think it their duty to abate every pleasure, to mingle bitter with every sweet, and to throw doubt over every fair prospect, lest others should enjoy too much. How much happiness do they destroy, both for themselves and others! How many hearts do they make sad, which they might have filled with delight!

Another undesirable disposition is the *morose*, which, when it is once agitated or angered, cannot or does not readily become restored to quiet or kindliness. When disturbed by any little circumstance, it remains for hours, perhaps for days, sullen and implacable. It will be pleased with nothing. Such a disposition is called *sullen*, *wilful*, or *obstinate*.

The correction of this habit is attended with some difficulty, and requires earnest and persistent efforts.

First. It will aid in this endeavor, to turn away the mind from contemplating the cause of the disquiet. Let it be engaged with something that will divert it wholly—that will direct it into a new and agreeable channel.

If some one has displeased you, or, as you may think, injured you, instead of bandying words, leave him and seek other and more congenial companions, not to recount and

brood over the unpleasantness, but to enter upon new scenes and pleasures with them. Avoid trouble as much as possible. When it does come, bury it without delay, and leave it without a remembrance. Never recall it.

Second. The counsel of a judicious friend will be found an invaluable aid. We must get the courage and resolution to say to our friend: "I desire to improve my disposition; you will do me a great kindness if you will aid me in the attempt, by advising me when I come to you. Tell me just what I ought to do: I will try to gain sufficient self-control to do as you say."

It will require no small degree of resoluteness, when in this unamiable mood, to go to such a friend and say, "Tell me now what I must do to restore my mind to quietness."

Another disposition of like nature is the *discontented*, which is never satisfied with what it has, or what it is, but is ever wishing for something else, something different.

If the weather be fair, it wishes it would rain: if it rains, it longs for sunshine. No one is fast enough or slow enough: nothing ever goes just right.

Such a state of mind arises, not because the things around us are good or bad, but from a habit of fault-finding. It is an unenviable quality, and makes its possessor the most undesirable of companions. It has no excuse, and is entitled to no forbearance.

The only rule in such a case is the emphatic one—*stop it at once.*

To assist the young, who sometimes find it difficult to carry out their good resolutions, it may be suggested:

1. Never mention the ills you expect or endure, unless they are so great as really to demand aid and sympathy. Most of our fancied ills quickly die of neglect; while nothing encourages their growth like attention. Speaking of them only renders others unhappy, as well as ourselves.

2. Cultivate the habit of looking upon the benefits and

advantages of your present condition and circumstances. Consider how much less they might have been, and how much greater they are than those of thousands.

3. Recollect that the distant always appears fairer than that near at hand; and what we desire, fairer than what we possess. Yet, should we gain what we wish for, we might find it less desirable than what we now have.

Let us consider the grounds for our being contented and cheerful.

The chief wants of mankind are health, food and clothing, and friends. If we have not *health*, if we *suffer bodily want*, if we are *friendless*, it is impossible for us not to be disquieted and unhappy.

What, then, are the reasonable expectations of the young in these respects?

1. With regard to health, the youth should know that the natural condition of man is *freedom from disease*, that sickness comes as accidents come; that as, by foresight and care, the latter may, in most cases, be avoided, so health may, by the same means, be to a great extent preserved.

The body is a complicated and delicate machine, yet it seldom fails in any of its numerous powers, and then only from abuse or neglect. If properly cared for, and not overburdened, it will serve us many years without complaint.

2. As to our physical wants, food and clothing, the great law of the animate creation seems to be, *superabundance*; by which is meant, that every being is supplied with more than is needed to sustain life. A man can produce with his hands more than he can consume. Hence well-directed labor must always result in accumulation, and this accumulation is the basis of wealth.

It appears, therefore, that he who enters upon the honest toil of each day, with a faithful, trusting heart, may look, in due time, for a competence.

Let him do his part faithfully and well, without anxious

"thought for the morrow," in the trust that Providence will reward his toil.

But it is necessary it should be *done well.* Whatever you do, do it well. Success never comes of work half done or ill done. Be not anxious to do many things. "Jack of all trades and good at none," is a homely proverb, but true. Learn to do *some one thing well;* it matters little what it is, *only do it well, and you need never have any fears about success.*

3. As to friends: we are so constituted that we instinctively give approbation to amiability and generosity, and to withhold it from selfishness. As a natural result, each person has as many friends as he is worthy of. If we are considerate of the wants and happiness of others, if we seek to aid them, and to add to their pleasure, we shall never want for friends. But if we are ever looking to our own advancement or profit or pleasure, neglectful of the feelings and enjoyment of others, few hearts will incline towards us, and those few even will hardly give us friendship that we can trust in time of need.

From these considerations we draw the conclusion that, with due care for the body, with a willingness for honest toil, and a kindly regard for others, *it is the order of Providence that we should possess health, abundance, and friends.*

Created under such laws, it would seem peculiarly out of place, and inexcusable, for man to cherish or even to give way to anxiety and discontent. It would seem to be little less than distrust of divine goodness and care.

Every indication within and around us points to a cheerful and contented frame of mind, as most acceptable to our Creator, most beneficial to society, and most advantageous to ourselves.

## CHAPTER XV.

### POLITENESS.

In society, each individual is esteemed in proportion to the pleasure he bestows upon others; or, in other words, to the extent he renders himself agreeable; and hence, every person desires to possess as pleasing an address and manner as possible. We are conscious of pleasure when we listen to refined conversation, or behold elegant manners, or when we think others observe them in ourselves. This pleasure is the origin and chief bond of polite intercourse. The elegant and refined are always sought by those of like sentiments, because both are mutually made happier. As has been well said, "good manners are a perpetual letter of introduction."

On the other hand, want of politeness is always regarded as discreditable. Wealth or family influence may introduce an unpolished person to the cultivated, but he is simply tolerated, not welcomed. He is not welcomed, because he cannot add to their peculiar pleasure. And more than this, the rudeness and awkwardness of the ill-mannered strike so harshly upon refined sensibilities as to be positively disagreeable. The exclusiveness, therefore, of polite society is nothing more than the exclusion of those who are likely to add nothing to its pleasure, or whose rudeness would destroy it. The doors to social elegance are open wide, and a welcome awaits every one who is capable of augmenting social pleasure.

But there is much indistinctness and error in the popular opinion of the nature of politeness, and consequent misapprehension of its proper culture. It is regarded more as a gift

of nature than as an acquirement obtained by effort; more as an accomplishment of body than of mind.

We shall find, however, upon examination, that politeness is as truly an acquisition to be gained by study and effort, as is the ability to produce good music. In either case the natural talent may be more or less developed, but in both alike must there be a clear knowledge of principles, and the application of them with faithful and assiduous practice. To look for politeness from the careless and inattentive, is as irrational as to look for music from one that never touched an instrument.

Politeness is good-nature expressed with refinement.

From this definition it appears that politeness involves two elements—a state of mind and a mode of expression.

It is a mistake to consider politeness as having reference only to the mode of expression or address. That mere ceremonious attention, however unexceptionable, is not accepted as genuine courtesy, is evident from the terms applied to it. It is characterized as hollow, insincere, or forced. We accept nothing as courteous which is wanting in heart, nothing done for mere show. Every act which would lay claim to being polite must be prompted by an obliging disposition.

To acquire this good-nature, this obliging disposition, some attention to our modes of thought and feeling is requisite.

One of the first elements of good-nature is generosity—a regard for others. A generous nature esteems the happiness of another equally with its own; and where all have a common right, is willing that others should share equally with itself. It cannot enjoy a pleasure purchased at the expense of another. Whilst seeking its own happiness, it cannot be unmindful of that of its fellows. It stands in entire contrast to that spirit which is ever looking for self; which never cares for others, never sacrifices a pleasure in their behalf, never accommodates itself to others; which wants the first, the best, and the most; which loves "the uppermost rooms

at feasts, and chief seats in the synagogues." Such a spirit is utterly repugnant to true notions of politeness. We can grant no approval to actions begotten of such sentiments, however graceful or punctilious.

But more than this: true generosity is not satisfied with simple justice, with merely giving others an equal opportunity; it takes a pleasure in assisting them in their purposes and pursuits. It is not indifferent to the success or failure of an individual, because a stranger; it is regardful of the wants of the weak, the infirm, and the helpless; and finds its own reward in the attempt to make others happier.

Such generous consideration for others always challenges our admiration and esteem. We feel it to be the offspring of a noble heart. It needs but to express itself gracefully to win the meed of true courtesy.

We must exercise due care, however, that this interest for our fellow-beings does not degenerate into inquisitiveness or meddlesomeness. Assisting them in their present circumstances does not imply any right of inquiry into their personal history or their future plans. Who an individual may be, what his business, whence he came, or whither he is going, is no part of our concern, unless such information is directly connected with the assistance we propose to render.

If a gentleman should assist an invalid or a lady in alighting from a rail-car, he might with great propriety ask if he could be of any further service; but it would be great rudeness, on no other acquaintance, to make inquiry as to their names or business.

Learn not to be disturbed at the minor faults of individuals. No human being is perfect. We have our faults, others have theirs. We must excuse, as we hope to be excused. We shall every day meet many disagreeable things, even in our best friends. It is a great lesson to learn not to see them.

Special care should be taken never to observe personal deformities or defects. A person may unfortunately possess

some irregularity of shape, of limb or face, or some peculiarity of manner or speech. To permit our attention to be drawn to any such singularity is highly discourteous, while to make it the subject of remark, would be an inexcusable incivility.

Polite society is concerned only with the good, the desirable, and the agreeable in persons and circumstances: the discovery of faults and errors, and their correction, is not its province, but rather that of the tutor and the moralist.

The second point to be considered is the attainment of refined expression or address.

One of the most important considerations in this respect is artlessness, or naturalness. Simple and unaffected language and manners are always pleasing. We should aim to say what seems fitting to the time and place, in the easiest and simplest way, selecting the best and most delicate words in good use; or if any thing is to be done, to do it in the readiest, quietest, and most unobtrusive manner.

Especially is display to be avoided—the saying or doing of any thing to attract attention. High-sounding words, lofty expression, great parade of learning, or flourish of manners, are accepted as evidence, not of good culture, but of want of it. Many a youth has been spoiled by trying to appear *big;* and many a Miss, by trying to appear *nice.* The one leads to a ridiculous pomposity, the other to a silly affectedness. It is unobtrusive worth, not glitter, that wins lasting esteem. Never attempt to appear any thing more nor better than you are. Be your best, and then do your best.

If we would learn the use and command of refined expression, we must practise it constantly in our daily intercourse. It is idle to think of being polite in the parlor to guests, if we are not so to our companions in our private apartments. If our common modes of address are rude and unpolished, if our language is low or vulgar, all attempts at elegance will

be but awkward and ill-concealed efforts to appear what we are not. Make it a rule to be as decorous towards friends and home companions as you desire to be to strangers and guests.

Regard well the language and manners of those whose society seems particularly agreeable. Notice their modes of thought, their happy turns of expression, their readiness to find some good in every individual and occurrence, the ease with which they adapt themselves to the peculiarities of every one, the pleasure which every little attention gives them, and their avoidance of fault-finding or criticism. By accustoming ourselves to observe these excellencies in others, we shall learn to imitate them in our own conduct.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### PRACTICAL HINTS ON BEHAVIOR.

PROPRIETY of deportment always has reference to the *occasion* and the *person* with which it is associated. What may be entirely suited to one occasion, or to one person, may be quite out of place under other circumstances.

I. BEHAVIOR TOWARDS SUPERIORS.

First. *Towards the Divine Being.*

All civilized beings recognize the goodness of the Giver of life and all its blessings. They recognize, also, the sentiments of thankfulness and gratitude as among the noblest implanted in the human heart. Worship is our expression of this grateful feeling. Its modes may be various, according to the differing tastes and judgments of men; but in every case it is the expression of the same sentiment. And hence, whatever may be the form, it has always, everywhere among enlightened people, been entitled to the highest respect.

1. Let whatever may seem to you most appropriate as worship be done with decency and becoming attention. To engage in conversation during a service of prayer, to gaze around over the audience, or to sit or lounge upon the floor under pretence of kneeling, are violations of the decencies of the occasion.

2. Let the acts, the forms, the ceremonies of others, even though distasteful to yourself, be treated with the same respectful consideration you ask for your own. You may not see the propriety of "immersion," of "the mourners' bench," of "sprinkling holy water," or of the "rite of confirmation," yet if you assemble with those that do, these ceremonies are entitled to the same regard you pay to those of your own faith.

3. It is also manifestly a dictate of propriety never to disturb an assembly for worship by entering late, or by leaving before the audience is properly dismissed.

Second. *Towards Parents.*

1. Always sustain the honor, the dignity, and the good name of your parents. Let it be understood by all, that you intend to pay deference to their wishes, that you never consent to do what they will not approve. Ever remember that the truest friend you have ever had, or perhaps ever will have, is your mother.

2. Let your address be respectful. When childhood's tender *papa* and *mamma* give way in advancing years, let it be to the worthy and always welcome *father* and *mother.*

3. Consider how often they have denied themselves pleasures for your happiness, and how incessantly they have toiled for your comfort, and seek to show that you are neither unmindful of it, nor ungrateful for it. Reward their parental love and care by your filial regard.

Third. *Towards Teachers.*

In many schools there exists a want of cordiality between pupils and teacher, a seeming antagonism—a feeling that the

teacher is over the pupils for correction, rather than for instruction and assistance,—a sentiment which, unhappily, too many teachers confirm rather than dissipate. Hence arises a want of sincerity in the intercourse of pupil with teacher—a disposition to evade or avoid rules, or to create annoyance.

Happily, this state of feeling is fast disappearing, and pupils are learning that the teacher esteems their friendship, that his greatest pleasure is in their improvement, and that he takes delight in imparting instruction.

The advancement of a pupil will always be proportionate to the sympathy existing between him and his teacher.

How, then, may the pupil secure this kindly interest and regard?

1. Let the teacher feel assured that you wish to please him; that you do not intend to do any thing he disapproves.

2. Assure him, also, that you try to get your lessons. If the lesson is too difficult, see the teacher at some proper time, and tell him that you have tried diligently to learn and understand the lesson, and ask his advice.

3. Be not ready to catch up every error or mistake the teacher may seem to commit. Consider that you may have misapprehended him, or that you may not fully understand the subject, or that the teacher may not have expressed his thoughts with clearness; and that at all events, there is much more likelihood that you are mistaken than that he is.

4. Forget not that the teacher's vocation is one of care and often of perplexity, and do what you can to make his labors lighter and more cheerful. Nothing rewards a pupil better than personal interest in his instruction.

II. Behavior towards Equals.

First. *Companions.*

The first consideration among associates or companions is that of equality of rights and privileges. No one can claim more than another. All stand upon the same footing. From this it is evident that we should ask nothing of others which

we would be unwilling to grant them; nor do to them what we would be unwilling to have them do to us.

2. Where only one of several can enjoy some special privilege, we should not selfishly claim it or seek to secure it for ourselves. That is a very ill disposition, but a far too common one. There are many persons who will join no enterprise if they cannot have a prominent place—who will lend no aid to any scheme if their advice is not followed.

3. Consider that each one's opinions and wishes are entitled to the same regard as your own. Hence if any plan of action is agreed upon, even though you did not think it the best, give it the same cordial support as if your counsel had been followed.

Second. *Towards Brothers and Sisters.*

There are few relations in life that afford a serener joy than that of brother and sister; and yet there are few that so often yield no more. Many brothers are given to teasing or vexing their sisters, on account of their timidity, their acquaintances, or for some other equally unimportant reason. On the other hand,

1. Brothers should remember that their privileges, their strength, and their opportunities are much greater than those of their sisters, and that, therefore, they should aid them in all their plans of pleasure or improvement.

Assist them to visit every place they desire, even if you have to remain at home, for at best their opportunities will be greatly less than yours.

2. Converse freely with them upon their affairs, and give them your cordial sympathy. Their wishes and preferences will often be unlike yours; but they will be gratified with your interest and counsel, when given in a friendly spirit.

3. Sisters should invite this kindly sympathy, and repay it by renewed expressions of sisterly affection. Brothers are always gratified by the kind regard of a sister, and yield more readily to its gentle influence than to almost any other.

III. Behavior towards Inferiors.

The weak, the young, and the ignorant naturally look up to the older and the wiser for protection and counsel, and are therefore, to a large extent, dependent upon them for happiness. It requires but a few words to incite them to effort, and but few to discourage them.

First. *Towards the Young.*

1. One of the leading elements of the young mind is timidity. It is startled at every unusual occurrence, and flies to the older and stronger for protection. We do them, therefore, a wrong to make frightful or terrifying representations to them, or to threaten severe and painful punishments for minor faults.

2. They are credulous, ready to believe all they hear, and to enter upon any course of action approved by the older. It is easy to inflame their resentment, and to incite them to retaliation. And there are those possessed of no higher moral sentiment than to betray this trust and confidence, and make it a means of leading the young into personal altercation and difficulty.

3. There are others who take delight in teasing, hectoring, and domineering over those younger or smaller than themselves. They never take one of their own size or strength. Such a spirit is mean and cowardly.

4. We should ever remember that the pleasures of the young, though simple and childish, are real to them; and that to add to their enjoyment, is as really a work of goodness as to add to that of the older.

Second. *Towards the Weak and Infirm.*

Providence has allotted our gifts variously. Some are strong, others are weak; some are vigorous, others feeble. The strong and healthful possess many advantages: they can go wherever they please, enter upon any pursuit, and try every resource of happiness. The feeble can hope for many of these, only as aided by the stronger. Hence—

1. Where enjoyment can be extended to but one, it should always be yielded by the stronger to the weaker. As in case of a ride or attendance at a pleasure-party, if but one can go, it should be the one whose health or circumstances permit such pleasures least frequently.

2. When there is some personal inconvenience to be suffered, and but few can be exempt, these should be of those least able to bear fatigue. Thus in an overcrowded car, seats should be tendered to the aged, the maimed, and the infirm.

Third. *Towards the Brute Creation.*

No noble, generous heart ever needlessly gives pain to a dumb animal. Much of our treatment of innocent and harmless creatures is brutal, cruel, and without excuse or palliation. Such is the overloading of beasts of burden, overdriving them, whipping and beating them when the task is beyond their strength, inciting animals to fight, as dogs and game-cocks, or the killing or wanton torturing of innocent and harmless animals. No young man that looks forward to a high and honorable career in life will ever debase himself by cruelty. Brutality and nobleness keep no companionship.

Reason and the sense of right were bestowed upon man that he might be the protector of these lower orders of creation, not the oppressor. It is our duty to see that they suffer no harm at our hands.

IV. Behavior in Public.

First. *In Public Assemblies.*

Endeavor to be in season, so as not to trespass upon public attention by entering late; and when such entrance is unavoidable, use the utmost care to make it unobservant and unobtrusive. Never leave but upon the most imperative reasons, until the proper dismissal of the audience.

At a musical entertainment, to converse or otherwise distract attention during the music, would be rudeness.

Second. *In the Street*

Let your deportment be quiet and unostentatious, your conversation in a subdued undertone. Loud talking or violent gesticulation in the street is incompatible with delicacy and refinement. Do not gaze at oddity of dress or peculiarity of persons. Learn to look without staring. Keep on the right-hand side of the pavement, and ladies on the right of gentlemen. A gentleman with two ladies should walk on the left of the tallest, not between them.

V. BEHAVIOR IN SOCIETY.

First. *In the Parlor.*

1. The very nature of a formal gathering or party precludes all idea of special association. Conversation and attention should be distributed among all alike. There should be no separate groupings, no cliques, no favoritism. It should be the care of each to see that no one is neglected or left alone.

2. It is a misapprehension that we are at liberty on such an occasion to speak only to those to whom we have been introduced. The invitation is, of itself, a sufficient introduction to every one present; and each one is expected, without further formality, to enter at once into conversation with those about him.

3. Be ready to contribute your share to the general enjoyment, without repeated or urgent solicitation, whether it be to sing, to play upon an instrument, or to take part in some game or amusement.

4. Consider it a part of your duty to make the occasion agreeable and pleasant to all. You should go not so much to be gratified yourself as to contribute to the gratification of others. Society is for the pleasure of all, not the few.

5. Whispering and private communications are regarded as offences against decorum. There are also many little disagreeable habits, against which we cannot too sedulously guard: such as putting the hands into the pockets; drumming with the hands or feet; whistling; standing with the

back to the fire, or with the hands behind the back under the coat; scratching the head; paring or cleaning nails; picking the nose or ears; blowing the nose; spitting; yawning; and many others of similar nature, which will suggest themselves to the thoughtful.

Second. *At Table.*

The first requisite at a table is neatness of person and apparel, and delicacy of intercourse.

2. Polite attention to those near you, to assist them to whatever they may desire, and to see that they are not left uncared for. Nothing is more awkward than to sit beside one who is so intent upon his own gratification as to be regardless of the wants of others.

3. Let the conversation be light, cheerful, and abundant. Avoid all unpleasant and disagreeable topics, and all upon which there may be much diversity of opinion. The heat of discussion and argument are not suited to the occasion.

4. Use the knife for cutting only, never carrying it to the mouth under any circumstances. Never use the tooth-pick at table, unless something should become painfully lodged in a tooth, and then with the utmost unobtrusiveness, and with the mouth covered.

5. Never insist upon a person being helped to more, nor to certain dishes; nor make any observations upon their preferences, nor that they have eaten little or much. Be observant that all are abundantly supplied, and then leave them free to the exercise of their own choice and taste, without comment or allusion.

6. Many little irregularities, which elsewhere would be of trivial importance, become at table unpleasant or disagreeable. Use, therefore, the greatest care that your manners and habits be pleasing and acceptable. Carelessness and want of propriety at the table are unpardonable. Scrupulously avoid, therefore, every ill-seeming habit,—such as eating with rapidity; stuffing the mouth; talking with the

mouth full; sipping tea or soup with a guzzling noise; chewing with the mouth open; crunching; gulping; picking the teeth with the fork or fingers; wiping the mouth with the hand,—and the like.

VI. Behavior in the Home Circle.

1. Each individual has an intellectual and physical constitution peculiar to himself. His disposition is not wholly like that of any other person, and sometimes quite unlike. Hence the tastes, the pleasures, and the modes of play or thought of each one will differ more or less from those of all others; but so far as these peculiarities do not interfere with the enjoyment of others, they should be left without interference. Each one should be left free to amuse and enjoy himself in his own way and at his own will. Elder brothers and sisters may advise, but should never attempt to control or dictate in amusements or harmless play.

2. Each child should early have a receptacle for his own individual property—a box, a trunk, a drawer, which he may feel is *his*, and subject to the inspection of no one but his parents. His rights of property should be early recognized and respected. One should not be permitted to take or interfere with another's "things."

3. Be ready to enter into any sport or amusement that the others may desire, even if you do not particularly care for it yourself. Never permit a pleasure to be declined for want of assistance, if it lies in your power to afford it.

4. Do not be inquisitive. Never be prying into one another's business. There are some persons who are never content if there is any thing, however unimportant, going on till they know all about it, and who sometimes take very questionable ways of finding out. Remember that an inquisitive person is always feared and always unwelcome.

5. Be no news-carrier: a busybody is always distrusted. Never permit any one to fill your mind with news about other people. Such a person will soon fill other people's minds

with news about yourself. There is a homely, but truthful maxim—*the dog that brings a bone, will take a bone.*

6. Guard against fault-finding and censoriousness. Every one, even the mature and wise, make mistakes sometimes—the young very frequently; but it is an ill disposition that is ever ready to say, "Didn't you know any better than that!" "You have been very foolish." The young are peculiarly sensitive to blame, and we should discriminate with the greatest care between malicious acts and inadvertent acts; and while we may blame the one, the other is to be counselled in kindness.

7. One of the greatest lessons of all is *forgiveness.* We all sometimes do wrong towards our fellows and companions, yet in our better moments we would gladly repair the wrong and have it forgotten. In this spirit should we forget and forgive. Never treasure up any of those little trespasses which youth is so liable to commit, and which, after all, spring more from inexperience than evil intent.

"To err is human—to forgive, divine."

8. Finally, be kind, open-hearted, and generous, with a friendly word and a helping hand for every one. Kindness costs little and gains much. Be helpful to the aged, respectful to those in the prime of life, companionable to the young, and useful to all. And if at any time your life should seem monotonous or aimless, and without promise of usefulness, forget not the words of the Great Master, "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, shall in no wise lose his reward."

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